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Dungeon® ADVENTURES

JULY/AUGUST 2000 ISSUE #81

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Dungeon® ADVENTURES

JULY/AUGUST 2000
ISSUE #81

Toil, says the proverb, is the sire of fame.
— Euripides, *Licymnius*

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Editorial

Landmark Issues

For fourteen years, *Dungeon Adventures* has remained one of the best-kept secrets in the roleplaying industry, winning over roleplayers with top-notch modules and its unswerving focus on the D&D® and AD&D® games. Over the years, the magazine has celebrated many landmarks, a few of which I thought I'd share:

Those of you who've been with the magazine since the beginning will remember Flame—the red dragon that first appeared in "Into the Fire" (Issue #1) and terrorized heroes again in "Out of the Ashes" (Issue #17). Continuing the theme of reappearing villains, this issue presents Kent Ertman's "A Race Against Time," which continues the exploits of Bruiser Holloway that began in "The Best Laid Plans" (Issue #79).

In Issue #19, the magazine published its first real "goodie"—the *deck of many things* for Randy Maxwell's adventure, "House of Cards." Several more "goodies" followed in later issues, including the shifting dungeon tiles for "Ex Libris" (Issue #29) and the miniatures-scale poster map for "The Fountain of Health" (Issue #39). This issue, we present Diesel's poster map of the Sleeping Dragon Inn to accompany James Wyatt's latest adventure, "The Door To Darkness." The inn, designed by Dan Bartman, won the Sleeping Dragon Inn design contest in *Dragon® Magazine* #251. Even if you don't play James' adventure, we hope you find the poster map useful in your home campaign!

In Issue #25, the magazine demonstrated its willingness to take chances by presenting a Top Secret/S.I.® scenario. Over the years, amid controversy, the magazine has continued to explore non-AD&D, non-D&D® game settings like the Marvel Super Heroes™ game and the Alternity® roleplaying game, broadening gamers' horizons while never losing sight of its main focus.

In Issue #44, contributor Ted Zuvich became the first non-staff member to write an editorial. Not only did the magazine encourage contributors to share their adventures, but they were now invited to share pearls of wisdom with hopeful authors.

In Issue #52, author Mike Selinker treated us to "Spirits of the Tempest," the first of three scenarios based on Shakespearean plays. Wildly popular among readers, the adventure was followed soon thereafter by "Dark Thane Macbeth" (Issue #54) and much later with "Lear the Giant-King" (Issue #78).

Tony DiTerlizzi astonished readers by doing all of the illustrations for Issue #61. Stephen Daniele did not only the illustrations but all of the maps for Issue #77.

Issue #62 is remembered as the last issue TSR produced before the Wizards of the Coast buyout, and Issue #63 is remembered as the first issue published under the Wizards of the Coast aegis after a painfully long six-month hiatus.

In Issue #68, we printed the first "Map of Mystery" and introduced readers to Artax, Piffany, Yeagar, and Nodwick, our popular cartoon mainstays.

In Issues #69–73, we published a five-part series set in the Mere of Dead Men—an experiment so successful that we're currently looking for new multi-part adventure ideas. (If you have any, send them our way!)

The landmarks continue with this issue, which will be remembered as the last issue of 2nd-Edition adventures. In two months, we bid farewell to 2nd Edition and welcome 3rd Edition. Next issue, *Dungeon Adventures* becomes the industry's main source for D&D adventures. We're making the magazine bigger, we're giving it an attractive new look, and we're going full color!

The past eighty-one issues have surprised and delighted us, but the journey is far from over. There are many adventures yet to tell, and there are plenty more landmarks on the horizon. We hope you'll be there with us when we discover them.

Chris Perkins

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Letters

Any thoughts on the adventures in this issue? Write to "Letters," DUNGEON® Adventures, *1801 Lind Avenue S.W., Renton, WA 98055. You can email us at* **dungeon@wizards.com**. *Please send subscription questions and change of address notices to* DUNGEON Adventures, *Subscriptions, P.O. Box 469106, Escondido, CA 92046-9106. Toll free: 1-800-395-7760. Email:* **dungeon@pcspublink.com**.

What the Kenku Said

Recently there have been two modules in which kenku NPCs talk. In "Veiled Threats" (Issue #78), the kenku, Krael, remains "within whispering distance of the baron." In "Keep for Sale" (Issue #79), the kenku, Kobu, speaks to the PCs from atop the castle wall.

According to the *MONSTROUS MANUAL*™ tome, kenku don't speak but communicate with each other telepathically. Has there been a rule change that I am unaware of, or are we just throwing away the rules with "artistic license"?

Royce Wilkinson
via email

Evidently we just threw the rulebook out the window. Since the kenku plays such a crucial role in each adventure, here's what we would recommend to correct the problem:

Kenku are adept at symbols, sign language, and pantomime. In "Veiled Threats," Krael can communicate with the baron in sign language. In "Keep for Sale," Kobu could pretend to be mute, communicating with the PCs using symbols drawn in the air or simple hand gestures. The DM could mimic Kobu's symbols and gestures and require the players to decipher them correctly, or the DM could have PCs make a successful Intelligence check to correctly decipher Kobu's wild gestures. It certainly makes for a more unusual roleplaying experience!

In the future, we'll endeavor to catch and correct these oversights before *they see print!*

Hooray for "Maps"

Thank you for the fine magazine. The maps, art, and adventures are all quite exceptional. I would like to drop in a vote for more series-type adventures like the Mere of Dead Men series (Issues #69–73). Whether it's done over a period of three or four issues or all in one issue is irrelevant to me, as long as the quality of work continues at its current level.

I concur with the majority of readers who support a diversity of world-specific adventures. I agree that any DM worth his or her weight in sand can easily adapt plotlines and ideas for almost any campaign world.

I would also like to offer an endorsement for the "Maps of Mystery" feature. Indeed, any aids you can give to your readers are worthwhile so long as they do not compromise the mission of the magazine.

Keep up the good work, and continue the streak of non-Chris Perkins contribution issues! (Just kidding, Chris!)

Tim McDonald
achilles@zianet.com

Readers are thrilled with the "Maps of Mystery" feature (another brilliant Chris Perkins idea). We'll continue publishing new maps whenever we have space to do so!

Good Seeds

This is just a quick note to tell you how much I enjoyed "Bad Seeds" in Issue #79. What a creative way to use such interesting creatures! And the villains' lair is great, too. And ratapults! I love

continued on page 27

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A RACE AGAINST TIME

BY KENT ERTMAN

Ka-boom!

Artwork by David Day
Cartography by Diesel

Kent writes: "I would like to dedicate this story to all the players who've gamed with me over the years. Some of my favorite characters have cameo roles (but only as good guys, of course)."

"A Race Against Time" is a generic AD&D® adventure for a party of 4–6 PCs of levels 1–3 (about 10 total levels). A good mix of classes is recommended, and a thief is essential to the party's success. To beat this scenario, the PCs must think quickly and logically. Brute force will no doubt fail miserably here.

The adventure is set in the city of Red Fern, the capital of a rural duchy. Several thousand people, among them many artists, scientists, and specialized craftsmen, live in Red Fern. The DM should feel free to replace Red Fern with another city from his or her existing campaign. Their motivation to save the city will be much more genuine if the PCs care what happens to its citizens.

The DM should run a short prequel to this adventure where the PCs are involved in the capture of a criminal named Bruce "Bruiser" Holloway. "The Best Laid Plans," appearing in Issue #79, was written expressly for this purpose, but the DM can design a different encounter whereby the PCs play instrumental roles in Bruiser's arrest. His capture and subsequent incarceration is vital to the plot of this adventure.

Adventure Background

In a duchy largely untroubled by organized crime, Bruiser Holloway is an unusual specimen. Just a few years ago he was nothing more than a small-town bully who stole money from anyone he could intimidate. Later he banded together with some of his drinking buddies and started extorting defenseless civilians, threatening to cause them harm if they didn't "pay up." This soon escalated into a full-scale protection racket.

One month ago, Bruiser tried to steal the molds for the duchy's coinage from the Red Fern mint. Nearly everything went wrong during the theft, and Bruiser was quickly apprehended (hopefully by the PCs). He was convicted of theft, extortion, and murder, and sentenced to life in a labor camp. He currently sits in the city prison awaiting transfer to Gypsum Quarry where he will spend the rest of his sorry days.

For the Player Characters

The PCs have come to Red Fern for business or personal reasons. Read or paraphrase the following to begin the adventure:

> Red Fern's market bustles with life. Booths are crammed together like books on a shelf, offering everything from glass decanters to

carved whalebone figurines to chickens, hammers, and delicate caramel candies. Competing for space at nearly every corner are street performers swallowing fire, juggling, balancing on their hands, or playing lively string music for crowds of onlookers. Exotic smells fill the streets, smothered by the fishy odor from boats lining the docks along Sandman's Bay.

You negotiate your way past a long line of women who are leaving the city well with buckets of water. A bright red snake drops out of the sky and hovers in front of you. It is about 2 feet long, and its back is flecked with spots of dark blue. You can barely make out a pair of equally bright red wings, beating at an impossibly fast pace. This strange creature flutters patiently before you, licking at the air with its slick black tongue. Fastened to its belly by a simple leather harness is a slim wooden scroll tube. Written on the scroll tube in green ink are the words "Open me."

This is an immature winged snake trained to deliver messages. It does not attack and flees if accosted.

Immature winged snake: AC 5; MV 12, fly 18 (B); HD 2+2; hp 9; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1–4; SA poison, spark shower; SD immune to electricity, SZ S (2' long); ML 9; Int semi (2); AL N; XP 250; *MM*/322.

Presumably one of the PCs takes the scroll tube, at which point the snake flies away. If they refuse to accept the case, the snake follows them wherever they go until it is driven away. If they open the tube, read or paraphrase the following:

Inside the scroll tube is a rolled piece of parchment and a glittering orange crystal about the size of your thumb. It has a rough surface and pulses with light. It is also warm to the touch. The text on the paper is equally peculiar:

"Would you like to play a little game? The little crystal you are holding is actually a *fireball* spell, frozen in time the instant before it detonates. Unfortunately, the stasis field around it degrades over time—until it explodes! There are seven others just like it planted around the city, set to explode in exactly 3 hours. I assure you that if even one of them is allowed to detonate, the lives lost will be staggering.

"On the back side of this letter are seven clues to the locations of the crystals. If you are clever, you might be able to find them. If you aren't, I win this game.

"Take one last look at the little crystal. Do you feel how warm it is? That's a sign that the stasis field around it is about to expire. If I were you, I would get rid of it as quickly as possible."

The crystal grows warmer with each passing moment and begins to flicker madly. You look around at the crowds of people stretching as far as you can see in every direction. What do you do?

The gem is a *fire crystal* that explodes in 2 rounds. (See the "Fire Crystals" sidebar for details.) Opening the scroll tube is the magical trigger that collapses this *crystal*'s stasis field. If not removed from the marketplace, the *fire crystal* kills 2d12+12 innocent bystanders.

If the PCs do not open the tube, the rest of the adventure does not happen. However, at some point the heroes will undoubtedly be curious to determine the scroll tube's contents; if they open the scroll tube somewhere other than the marketplace, the DM should modify the adventure accordingly.

Give the players 30 seconds of real time to come up with a solution. There is just enough time to push through the crowds and hurl the *crystal* into Sandman's Bay. The explosion sprays water over nearly 100 yards and completely reduces an empty fishing boat to kindling. They might also drop the *crystal* down the nearby well; in this case, when the *crystal* explodes it shoots a massive column of flame and steam nearly 50 feet into the sky. A PC might also climb to the top of a nearby building and hurl the *crystal* into the air. If he or she can time it just right (doing so requires a successful Intelligence check), the explosion would be out of range of the people below.

There is a chance that the PCs might simply drop the *crystal* and run. There should be just enough time for them to force their way out of danger. In this case, Captain Coby (see below) does not find the PCs and is not available to help them with the rest of the adventure, unless they seek out the guard later on.

In any case, there will probably be a spectacular visual effect and a thunderous explosion upon detonation. The ruckus throws the crowds into chaos and attracts the city guard. Read or paraphrase the following at this time:

An incredible tearing sound followed by an irresistible rush of air knocks you to the ground. A brief, scorching wave of heat stings your skin. A second later, there is a brief moment of silence and then chaos. All around you people are screaming.

People start to panic and bolt, colliding and crawling over each other to safety. A group of city guardsmen forces its way through the escaping masses into the rapidly clearing area. "You there!" shouts the man at the front pointing at your group. "What's going on here?"

Gecko's Riddles

1.
Man strives to bend metal to his will
And continues to forge still.

2.
Search beneath the Duke's throne

3.
An imposter alight
In the skies at night.
Tho' that be a lie,
'Tis not really the sky!

4.
Held firmly in the high hand of justice.

5.
Underwater, above the sea
Fed by rock and rain.
Behind a wall of earth and stone,
To keep it all contained.

6.
The Wanton Wench at dockside,
Her arms are open wide.
Beneath her bales of golden hair,
Her hidden charms reside.

7.
Middle of town,
Look around.
What's to be found?
Seek a reflection
Providing direction
To minute confection.
Under the floor,
Under the floor,
Behind the square door.

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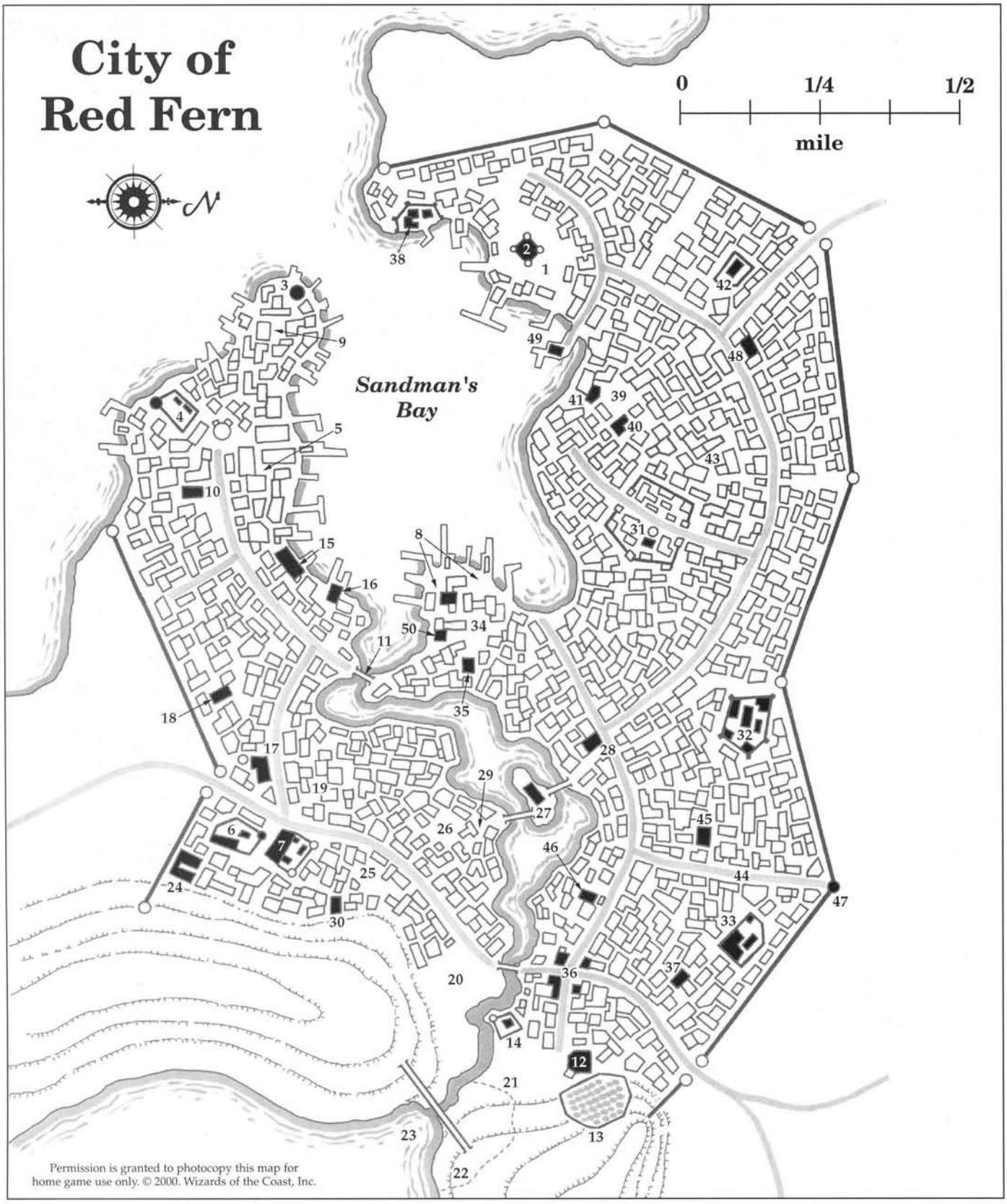
City of Red Fern
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Red Fern Encounter Key

1. Well
2. Market Pavilion
3. Lighthouse
4. Sullius's Tower (high-level wizard)
5. Warehouse District
6. Prison
7. South Barracks
8. Dockside Avenue (tavern district)
9. Fisherman's Quarter
10. Riddle's Tobacco (produces high quality cigars and pipe tobacco)
11. Coral Bridge
12. Warren's Winery
13. Warren's Vineyards
14. Fedoruk Castle (city councilor)
15. Gherren Warehouse (merchant house)
16. Manera Warehouse (merchant house)
17. Plimpton's Restaurant (famous fine dining establishment)
18. Terrance's Jewelry (gnomish artisan of some renown)
19. Gold Quarter (upscale housing)
20. Whispering Vale (public park)
21. Fedoruk Park (public park)
22. Overlook Point (public park)
23. Red Fern Reservoir
24. Rankinford's Stables (sells war horses)
25. Soldier's Square (shops and taverns frequented by the city guard)
26. City Center Square (upscale shopping)
27. Civic Offices
28. Government Center (Office of Laws, Ducal Registry, Parliament Chamber, Ministry of Public Affairs)
29. Temple Street (location of many churches)
30. Brutus's Bakery (famous for cinnamon rolls)
31. College Town (walled compound of thirteen affiliated colleges)
32. North Barracks
33. Manera Compound (merchant house)
34. Brewer's Square
35. Banshee's Beers (famous for dark, dwarven ales)
36. Smiths' Corner (four dwarven smiths located one at each corner)
37. Old Joe's Smithy (human smith)
38. Nork's Compound (merchant house)
39. Beggar's Square
40. Pink Parrot Tavern
41. Windy's Tavern
42. Castle Reft (wealthy elven diplomat)
43. Students' District
44. Sages' Way
45. William's (sage)
46. Harriet Helmswood (sage)
47. The War Tower
48. Lord Bob's (clothier)
49. Farmers' Union Hall
50. Brewers' Union Hall

The man is named Coby, captain of the city guard. Since the PCs are near the middle of the action, he singles them out and asks for an explanation. If the PCs were involved in "The Best Laid Plans," Captain Coby recognizes them immediately.

For the Dungeon Master

Bruiser Holloway has an extensive network of underlings. His second-in-command, a thief named Gecko, is currently embroiled in a daring escapade to free his master. Gecko is cruel, sadistic, and unbalanced. He is fond of intricate games and plots, and he often pursues difficult solutions to simple problems just for thrills. While his master languished in prison, Gecko took advantage of Bruiser's substantial resources to engineer an incredible prison break.

This little escapade with the *fire crystals* is one of Gecko's proudest achievements. While the PCs and the entire city guard are occupied collecting his bombs from all over the city, he plans to break Bruiser out of prison and spirit him out of the city. Gecko involved the PCs in this scheme as revenge for capturing Bruiser in the first place. It should be noted that Gecko does not actually want the PCs to succeed. He quite enjoys his little games of cat and mouse, but only so long as he wins. He has provided the PCs with a task that he believes is beyond their means to accomplish.

Further complicating matters is the presence of Gecko's partner-in-crime, his sister Evelyn. She is a mage of moderate power with connections in the duchy's community of wizards. In the months before his arrest, Bruiser pursued Evelyn romantically. She flirted but rebuffed him. His advances became aggressive and ultimately violent. Shortly afterward, Bruiser was thrown into prison, and Evelyn wants him to stay there.

Her loyalty to her brother prevents Evelyn from opposing him directly. Evelyn has therefore taken steps to tip the odds in the PCs' favor without revealing her involvement. She has planted clues for them, in the hopes that they will foil the prison break before her brother reveals his involvement.

The Captain and the Guard

Captain Coby is head of the city guard in the absence of the general, the colonel, and the court wizard who are on a diplomatic mission to avert border fighting in the North. Coby is capable but inexperienced. Faced with the life and death decisions of this crisis, he is unable to make up his mind and defers completely to the PCs. He answers all of their questions to the best of his ability and efficiently executes any task put to him, but he does not take the initiative.

It should be apparent to the PCs after speaking with the captain that unless they take charge, many innocent citizens will be killed. Coby seems too flustered to act. To his credit, he knows every nook and cranny of this city like the back of his hand. So while he cannot decipher the clues on Gecko's list, if the PCs lead him in the right direction and help focus his thinking, Coby can solve nearly all of them.

Coby has one hundred men at his disposal. Obviously, a complete evacuation of the city is impossible in 3 hours. It wouldn't even be possible to spread word to more than a quarter of the residents. What the guards can do is evacuate specific locations. For example, if the PCs determine from the first clue that there is a bomb planted in one of the city's five smithies, they can send five groups of guards to evacuate and hold them. An evacuation team requires five guards.

The guards can also help the PCs search a specific location or quickly clear a crowded area, as most citizens recognize the authority of the guard. Clever PCs can think of other ways to make use of the soldiers.

The biggest risk with the guards is spreading them so far and so thin that the PCs eventually lose track of them. Guards assigned to a task complete it and then stay where they are until they are told otherwise. These men are effectively lost to the PCs unless someone retrieves them. In the short time available, keeping tight reign on so many guards should prove a major challenge. This is exactly what Gecko is hoping will happen.

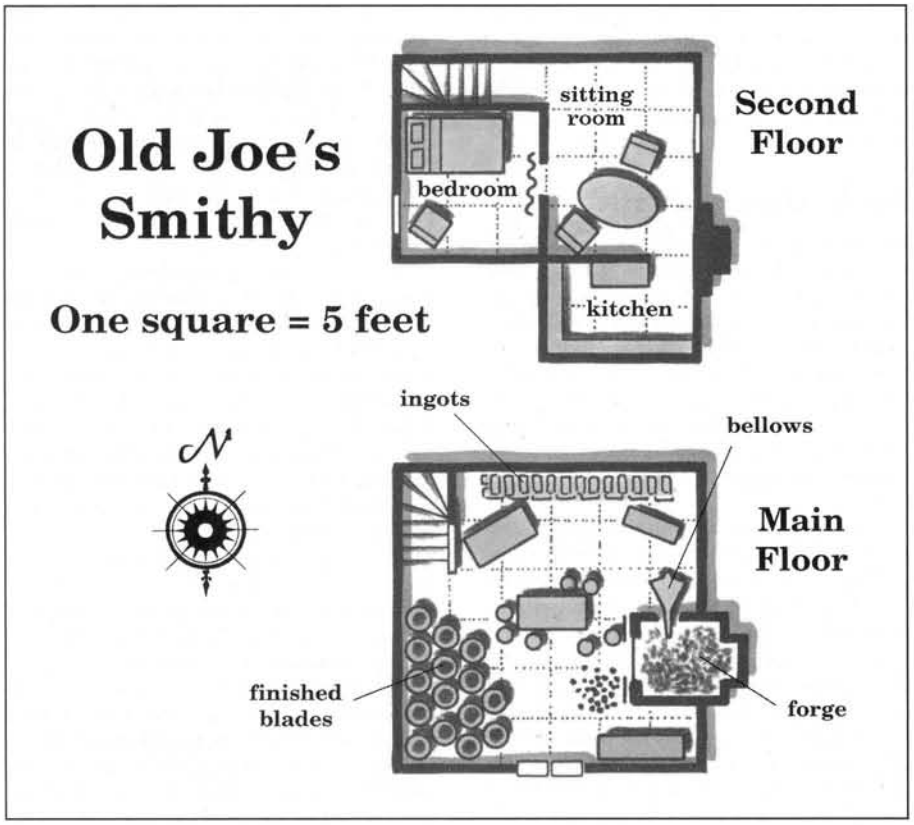
The simplest way for the PCs to avoid this problem is to tell Captain Coby what they want done and let him issue the orders. In this case, he tells his men to complete their task and then return to the North Barracks (area **32** on the map of Red Fern). He then uses two or three dedicated runners to retrieve them later.

Coby insists on accompanying the PCs and absolutely refuses to leave them under any circumstances. He also tries to keep at least five of his guards with him at all times unless convinced they are needed elsewhere.

Time & Movement

The DM should begin the game by setting a clock on the gaming table and then giving the players 3 hours of real time to find all of the crystals. While not strictly accurate, it frees the DM from keeping rigorous track of time. The goal is to make the players tense and keep the action moving without constantly stopping to do bookkeeping.

The best strategy for the players is to try and solve the clues at the start, and then plot a course that minimizes backtracking. To simulate the time it would take the characters to run from place to place, the DM can calculate



their travel time and deduct it from the 3-hour time limit. Based on the city map, the DM can assume it takes 1 minute of real time to cover each eighth of a mile.

The PCs also lose precious minutes if they must resort to randomly searching the various locations. The time required to do this is specified in the text, and the DM should subtract this from the total real time remaining.

The DM should photocopy the Red Fern map and encounter key and give them to the players. All the relevant areas are identified along with many red herrings. The map and key reduces the PCs' dependence on Captain Coby for directions. The DM can also photocopy the "Tour of Red Fern" handout, which describes the important areas of the city as well as several red herrings. The handout appears at the end of the adventure.

Locations of the Bombs

Each location on Gecko's list is detailed below. If, however, the party misinterprets a clue and ends up searching at the wrong location, the DM must be prepared to wing it and invent a detailed description. If the only places that are explained in any detail are the correct ones, the party will immediately figure this out and make short work of the adventure.

Clue #1: The Smithy (area 37)

The Clue: The *crystal* is in the forge at Old Joe's Smithy. "Bend metal to his will" implies a smithy. The word "man" is an obscure reference to Old Joe being human. The word "forge" gives away the specific location.

Captain Coby: If the PCs determine that they're looking for a smithy, Coby says that there are five in the city. If asked about their respective proprietors, Coby says four are owned by dwarves and one is owned by a human named Old Joe.

Encounters: Old Joe is a grizzled fifty-year-old man with thinning gray hair and black soot smeared all over his face. He works hard and has an exclusive contract making short swords for the duchy's army. Joe cooperates immediately once the situation is explained to him and helps with the search. He can't offer any advice if shown the clue.

The smithy is a 30-foot-square stone building with two floors. The second floor is the living quarters for Joe and his bedridden wife, Judith. It contains a bedroom, a kitchen, and a small sitting room. The main floor is the smithy proper and is filled with swords in various stages of completion. There are four metal benches loaded with tools and broken swords. Heaped at the back is a pile of one hundred iron ingots that reaches to the ceiling. Lined neatly against the west wall are fifteen barrels filled with finished blades. The forge, bellows, and a massive pile of coal rest against the east wall. In the center of the room are Joe's hammers, two anvils, and seven quench buckets filled with black, scummy water.

The *crystal* is not obvious, lying nestled on top of a pile of red-hot coals in the forge. Anyone looking directly into the fire for at least 1 round, however, notices the rhythmic flickering. The *crystal* is burning hot, and touching it causes 1d4 points of damage, plus 1d4 points for reaching into the forge. The only safe way to remove the *crystal* is with a pair of Joe's tongs. If asked to assist, Joe does so gladly. The *crystal* takes 15 minutes to cool; until then it cannot be touched and burns through pouches and bags. Dumping the *crystal* in the quench bucket cools it immediately.

A random search of the smithy turns up the *crystal* in 3d20 minutes, less 1 minute for every person searching (up to fifteen).

Consequences: If the *crystal* explodes, Joe, his wife, and her nurse are killed. The explosion destroys the smithy and the army's entire supply of short swords, which leaves the soldiers short of weapons for months.

Clue #2: A Nose for Irony (area 27)

The Clue: This clue should point the PCs to the duke's place of business. The word "throne" has a decidedly double meaning here. The *crystal* is buried in the filth beneath the privy in the Civic Office Building.

Captain Coby: The Captain can say only that the duke is probably at the Civic Offices. He doesn't recall ever seeing a throne there.

Encounters: The Civic Office is a small but elegant building, reflecting the city leader's modesty and excellent taste. The duke and his three aldermen are hard at work today processing claims from the Brewers' Union.

Gecko has arranged a surprise for the PCs. Three of his thugs are hidden in the building, waiting to ambush anyone who tries to recover the *fire crystal*. They are positioned throughout the building, as detailed below.

Thugs, human males T2 (3): AC 9; MV 12; T2; hp 9 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; Dex 15, roll 1d4+6 for other ability scores; SZ M; ML 13; AL LE; XP 35; dagger.

Gecko knows full well that this bomb will inflict very little physical damage, but it will cause immeasurable harm to the duke's pride and reputation, not to mention to his interior decor. It also sends a clear message that not even the city's top bureaucrat is safe from Bruiser's gang. Gecko therefore wants this particular bomb to go off more than the others.

The PCs are free to let themselves into the building. The initial difficulty will be getting anyone's attention.

1. Great Hall.

This grand chamber has a vaulted ceiling. A massive stone fireplace stands opposite the doors, and around the room are a number of comfortable chairs and sofas. A large desk of polished red wood stands near the west wall. Clustered around it are a dozen men, shouting alternately at one another and the harried woman behind the desk. She is trying to take their names and get them to sit down.

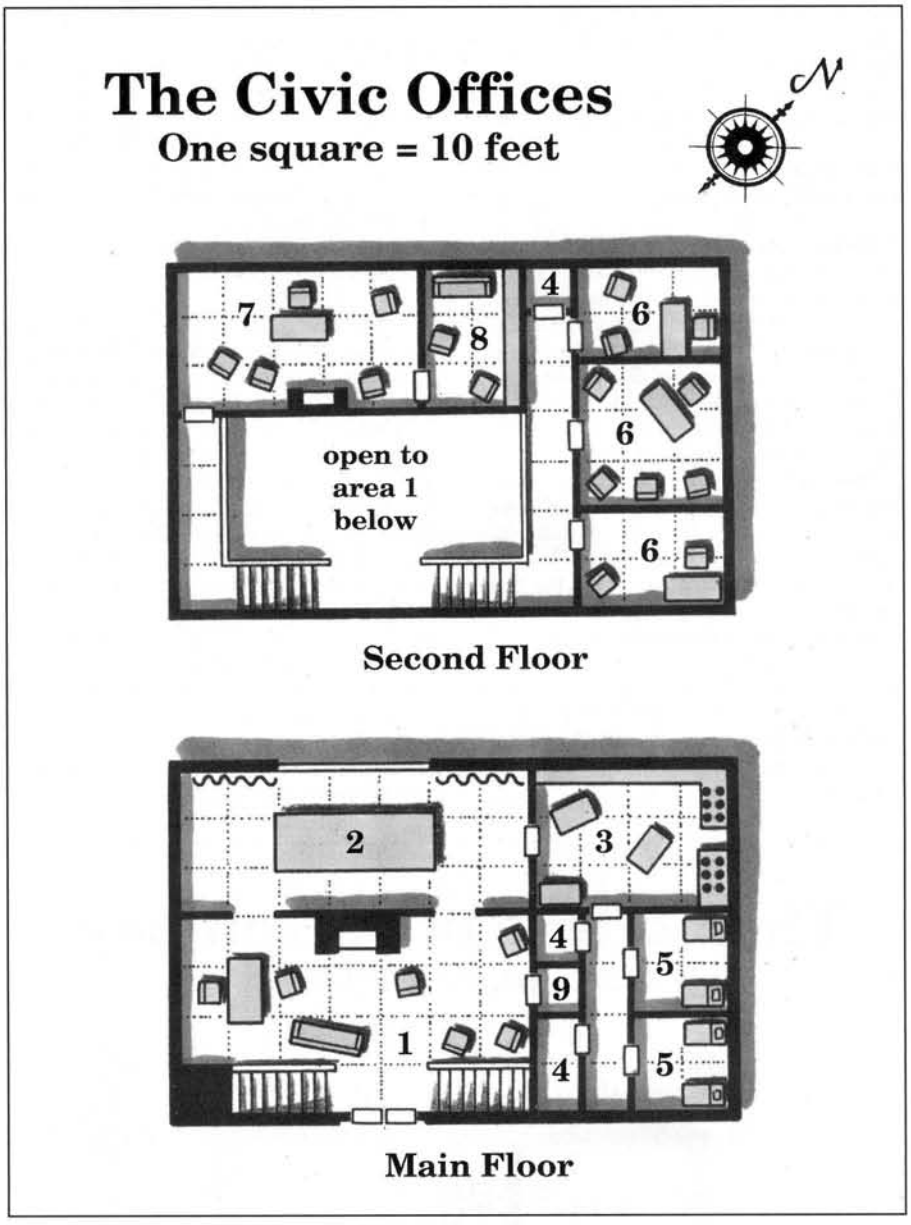
Any attempt by the PCs to force their way to the front of the line is met with outrage from the brewers and the clerk. Even Coby is unable to pull rank here. If the PCs persist, the mood turns ugly. Fists start flying in seconds unless a charismatic PC can calm the situation with a successful Reaction check. The men are unarmed but fight without checking morale until at least three of them are felled. These men are not evil, just riding high on their emotions, so the PCs should not kill or harm them. If the PCs make any moves to do so, Coby stops them by force if necessary.

Enraged brewers, 0-level human males (11): AL N; AC 10; MV 12; hp 5 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d2 (unarmed strike); SZ M; ML 10; XP nil.

One of Gecko's thugs is among the shouting brewers. If fighting breaks out, he joins the mob and tries to backstab a PC. After this initial strike, he tries to slip out the front door in the confusion. If the thug isn't identified, he stays with the brewers until a PC enters the privy (area **9**). He then attacks in concert with his partners.

Because the brewers have been shouting for nearly half an hour, fighting does not draw the attention of the other people in the building. The clerk hides behind her desk at the first sign of violence and refuses to come out.

When the fight is over, the yelling resumes almost immediately. None of the brewers is calm enough to help the PCs in any way.



2. Dining Room. This room is used for formal entertaining and is dominated by a long wooden table with a dozen elegant silver candlesticks. A huge window spans the north wall, framed by thick purple curtains. Hidden behind the easternmost curtain is another of Gecko's thugs. He remains hidden until he sees a PC head toward the privy, at which point he sneaks out to attack.

3. Kitchen. The kitchen is typical for a manor of this size. There are two great ovens and stoves, shelves packed with food and spices, cabinets filled with china, silverware, and crystal, and counters covered with cooking utensils. Two cooks and two maids work here. If questioned about the duke, they say he is in his office and point the way. If asked about a throne, they wrinkle their foreheads in confusion. The duke has no throne.

4. Storage Closets. These closets are cluttered with items. The main floor rooms are filled with cleaning supplies, while the second floor closet contains sheets of paper, ink bottles, quills, extra chairs, and other office equipment.

5. Servants' Rooms. The two cooks share one room, and the maid and the clerk share the other. Each room contains a bed and chest for each occupant, a single wardrobe, a rolltop desk, and a mirror.

6. Aldermen's Offices. These offices are tastefully decorated with plush blue carpets, paintings, small statuary, and wall hangings. Each room contains a large mahogany desk, several wooden file cabinets, and some office chairs. The drawers and cabinets are stuffed with papers and used quills.

Also in each room is a frustrated city official and 2–3 belligerent members of the Brewers' Union. Discussions are not going well, and any intrusion is greeted with a shouted demand to leave. The PCs must make a successful Reaction check to even be heard, although this time if Captain Coby is present the check is made with a –5 bonus. If the check

fails, all the men begin shouting and try to force the PCs out of the room, slamming the door behind them.

If the PCs have a chance to explain the situation, the men calm down immediately. The brewers gather all of their members and flee while the alderman gathers his fellows and leads the PCs to the duke.

7. Duke's Office. This large, handsomely appointed office is where the duke conducts his business. An unlit fireplace dominates the southeast wall. The duke and seven members of the Brewer's Union (including one of Gecko's thugs in disguise) occupy the room. The duke is a large-bellied man of unshakable composure. He sits facing the enraged brewers with a calm smile on his bearded face.

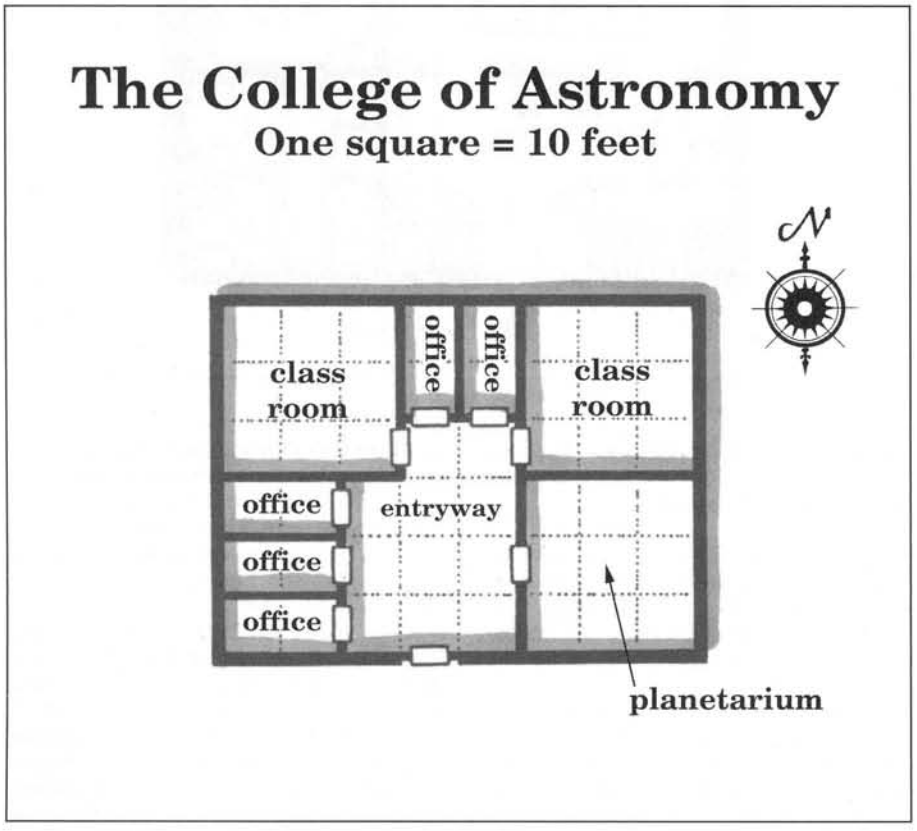
Interruptions are met with a polite inquiry from the duke. He takes what the PCs say seriously and orders the brewers to evacuate the building immediately. The building clears out in 3 rounds. Remaining inside are the duke and the thug who feigns loyalty to the duke as an excuse to stay in the building.

If asked about a throne, the duke is confused. He has no throne room, and his desk chair is just like all the other chairs in the building. He can offer no insight, although he and his aldermen volunteer to help search the building.

8. Private Study. This is a comfortably decorated study where the duke can relax in private. Shelves crammed with books line the northeast wall; the books cover a variety of mundane topics. A thick red carpet covers the floor, and the other walls are decorated with paintings of the city and the surrounding countryside. The room also contains two overstuffed chairs, a padded sofa, two coffee tables, and a well-stocked liquor cabinet with a good supply of glasses.

9. Privy. This small, heavily perfumed room houses a porcelain toilet bowl. Beneath the privy is a shallow stone pit filled with waste. Because it is buried in muck, the *crystal* is invisible, and PCs must physically search through the filth to find it. This unsanitary process takes 1d4 rounds.

As soon as the PCs begin a concerted search of this room, any thieves left in the building attack, backstabbing if possible. If the servants are still present, one of the cooks sees the thief in the dining room and hits him over the head with a frying pan for 4 points of damage. If caught, the thieves refuse to answer questions. They were not told where the other *crystals* were hidden, nor do they know about Gecko's plan to break Bruiser out of prison, so any time spent interrogating them is likely wasted.



Evelyn has planted a piece of parchment in one thief's pocket. It reads as follows:

> *One needs a hook to catch a fish,*
> *And a flickering lure to catch its eye;*
> *But minnows are a worthless dish*
> *To one with bigger fish to fry.*

Evelyn's clue provides some insight into the true purpose of the *fire crystals*; the PCs and city guards are the "minnows" drawn to her brother's lure, but Gecko's true "catch" is something much more significant.

If the PCs find the *crystal* in time, the duke runs to his office and returns with four potions of *healing*. He also assembles fifteen off-duty city guards to accompany the PCs.

Down To the Wire: As the *crystal* grows warmer, it literally bakes the waste in the privy, and the smell slowly permeates the entire manor. Five minutes before detonation, the odor is so foul the duke sends his servants to clean the room.

Consequences: If not disturbed from their routine, the two chambermaids cleaning the privy at the time of detonation are killed in the blast. The explosion blows open the privy walls and scatters the filth throughout the entire main floor.

Clue #3: Wish Upon a Star (area 31)

The Clue: The *crystal* is pasted to the ceiling among the constellation displays at the city's planetarium. The wording of the clue refers to the stars in the sky. The final line "'tis not really the sky," implies a fake sky or a model. The clue says outright that there is an "impostor" in this fake sky.

Captain Coby: There is little Coby can do to help the PCs. If they ask explicitly about planetariums or star displays, he suggests the College of Astronomy.

Encounters: The college is a 80' × 60' single-story wooden building. The college contains a pair of classrooms, five offices, and the main attraction: the planetarium.

The planetarium itself is a 30' × 30' room with a domed ceiling. The inside is painted black, and there are no light sources. Pasted to the roof and walls are thousands of tiny glowing glass beads of various sizes, colors, and shapes, painstakingly duplicating the various constellations in the night sky.

When the PCs first arrive at the building, Professor Myra Davies (the dean) and a student are discussing celestial theory in the entryway. Myra is a middle-aged woman of medium height with long raven-black hair. She is intelligent, and her knowledge of the stars is unsurpassed. She is mortified at the prospect of any damage to her star display, which took her staff years to complete. She

helps the PCs any way she can. If shown the clue, she immediately deduces it means the crystal is hidden in her star display.

The party's main difficulty here will be finding the fire crystal among the multitude of other glittering, flickering crystals. A random search of the room takes 2d20+30 minutes, less 1 minute for each person helping (up to fifteen). A successful Astronomy proficiency check reveals an out-of-place star in the constellation of Hyralla. Professor Davies' proficiency score is 16, and her student's score is 12, but they assist only if asked.

Gecko has placed a wire and tiny spring mechanism behind the *crystal*. The trap is easily spotted, even by non-thieves. However, a thief who makes a successful Remove Traps roll can deduce that the trap is false, and that any attempt to disarm it trips the real trap: a poison needle mechanism hidden behind an adjacent crystal; the needle inflicts 1 point of damage and is coated with Type C poison. The needle fires only if the false trap is tampered with. One can safely pull the *fire crystal* off the wall without triggering the needle.

Down To the Wire: Thirty minutes of real time before detonation, the rapid flickering of the *fire crystal* makes it stand out. It takes only half the time to locate by random search, and proficiency checks are made at a +3 bonus.

Consequences: When the *crystal* explodes, it destroys the planetarium and the entryway. Both Professor Davies and her student are killed in the blast, but no one else in the building is injured.

Clue #4: Justice is Blind (area 28)

The Clue: "Hand of Justice" implies the legal system, and hence the Office of Laws. When the clue mentions the "high hand," it refers to the top ranking lawmaker, Kopas the High Judge. The *crystal* is not literally hidden in his hand, but rather in the gavel that he holds in his hand.

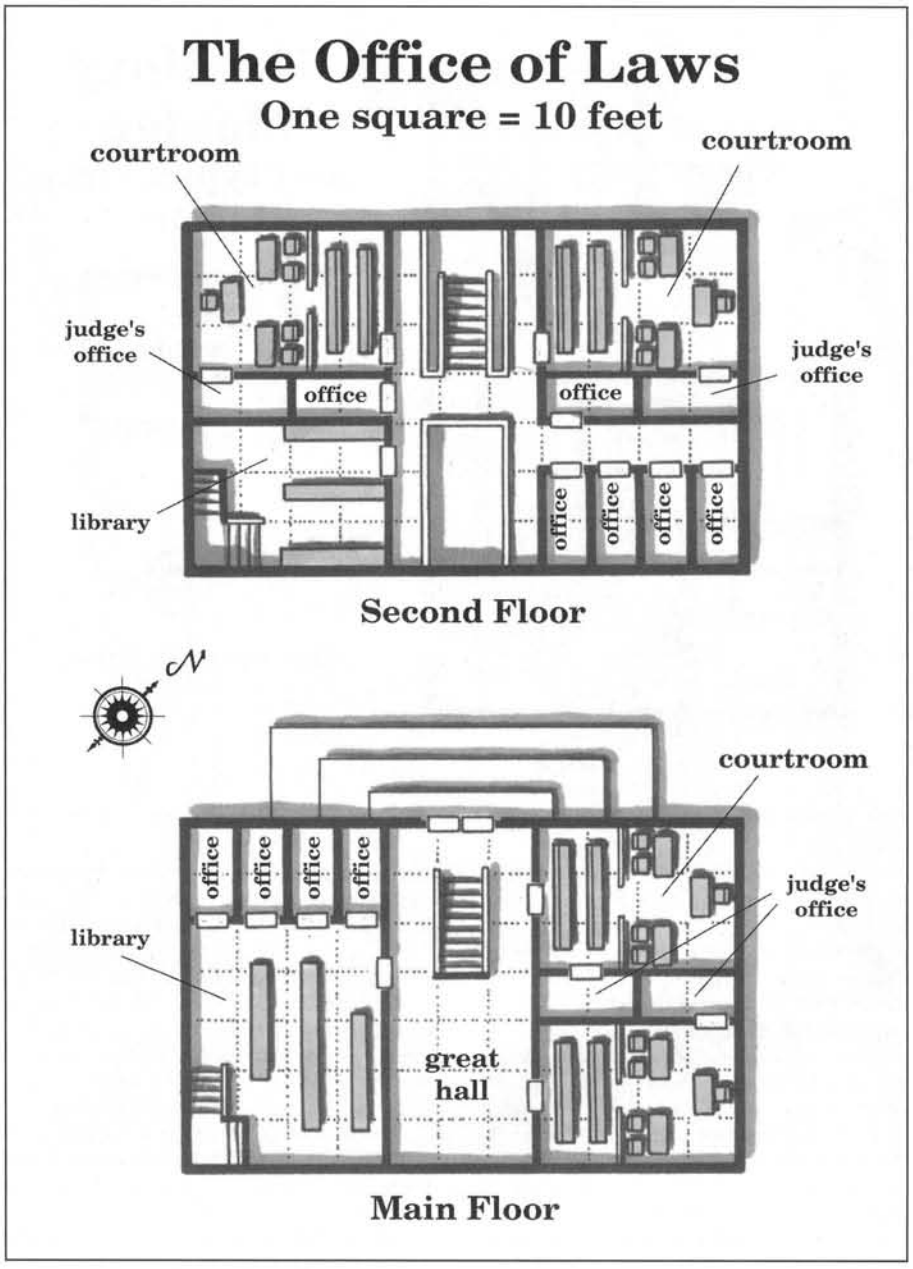
Captain Coby: If the PCs fail to deduce that the clue is referring to the Office of Laws, the Captain suggests it.

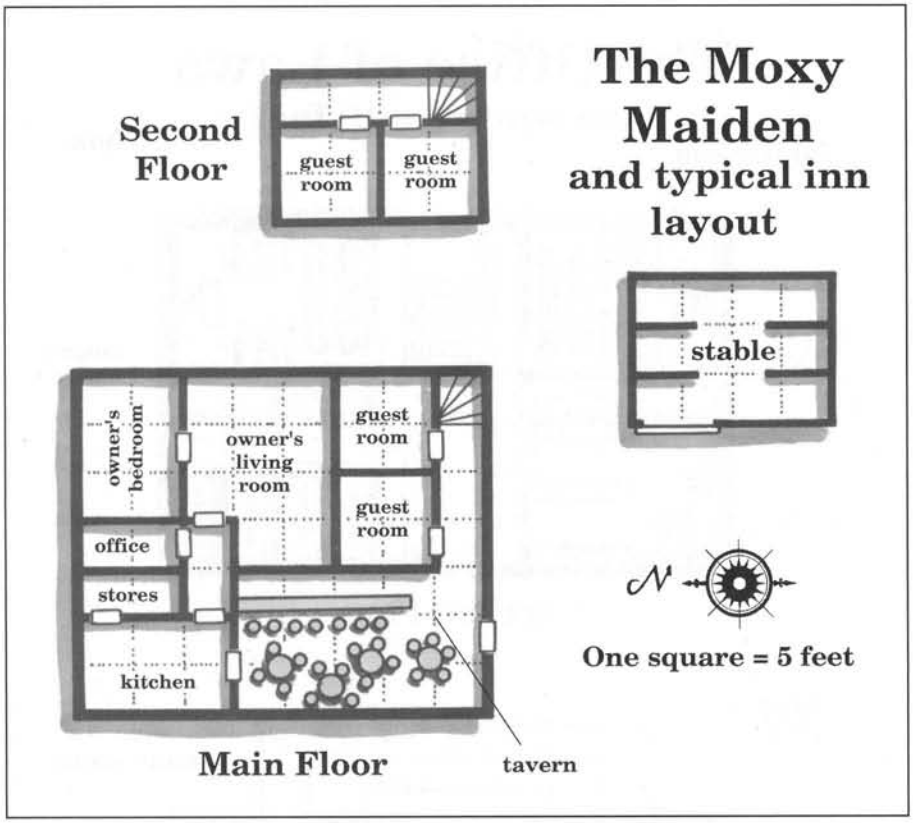
Encounters: The Office of Laws is a stately building with two floors. There is one courtroom for each of the city's four judges, a number of offices for high ranking lawyers, and an extensive law library. In front of the building stands an exquisite fountain with sculptures of leaping dolphins spewing water from their open mouths. A 20'-tall statue of a man in a long ceremonial robe stands in the middle of the sculpture. His left hand is at his side, clutching a thick book, and his right hand is held high above his head, palm facing upward.

When the PCs see the fountain, they might assume the *crystal* is in the statue's raised hand. Climbing the statue is difficult because of the smooth, curved surfaces, kept slick and moist by the spouting water. Impose a –40% penalty to all Climbing checks. Failure means a noisy fall into the fountain for 1d4–2 points of damage. If any PC reaches the raised hand, he or she finds a piece of slate nestled between the statue's massive fingers. Etched onto the slate is a message that reads "Nice try, but not even close."

The PCs could waste a lot of time in the fountain scaling the statue unless they are clever enough to pick up two hints. First, if the *crystal* were in the statue's hand, it would do virtually no damage when it exploded. This is inconsistent with the other bombs, which are all deliberately placed to inflict serious injury. The second clue is far subtler: Judge Kopas presided over Bruiser's trial. Captain Coby can tell the PCs this if they ask, but they need to have already deduced that Bruiser is involved.

If and when the PCs descend upon the courthouse to search for the *fire crystal*, they find all four courts in session. A random search of the massive edifice takes 2–4 hours of real time to find the bomb, less 1 minute for





every person searching. The judges don't tolerate interruptions and must be allayed by a PC making a successful Reaction check (with a –5 bonus if Captain Coby is present). Otherwise, the judge is uncooperative and causes such trouble that searching his court requires a full 20 minutes of real time.

If the PCs ask a judge for help interpreting the clue, he either correctly guesses that the "high hand of justice" refers to High Judge Kopas (40% chance) or guesses that it refers to the statue in the fountain (60% chance). Once the PCs convince a judge of the urgency, he orders every lawyer in the building to help with the search, reducing the overall search time by 2 hours.

Consequences: If the *crystal* isn't found in time, the explosion destroys one of the courtrooms and each of the adjacent chambers. The blast kills High Judge Kopas, fourteen innocent bystanders, and four of the city's twenty staff lawyers. It also destroys hundreds of years of legal records. This leaves the city's legal system in chaos for months.

Clue #5: A Fishy Situation (area 23)

The Clue: The *crystal* is hidden in the deepest part of the city's water reservoir at the outskirts of town. The clue plainly says "underwater," but the reference to "above the sea" rules out the Bay. "Behind a wall" refers to the dam that contains the reservoir. "Fed by rock and rain" refers to the mountain springs that empty into it and the rain that fills it.

Captain Coby: If the PCs ask about bodies of water above sea level, Coby is only 35% likely to think of the reservoir. If the PCs figure that the clue is referring to a dam, the Captain figures out the clue immediately.

Encounters: The reservoir is essentially an artificial lake. The dam wall is nearly 8 feet thick, and currently the water level is 10 feet from the top. This area is deserted.

The *crystal* rests at the bottom of the lake against the dam wall where the water depth is 20 feet. The water is somewhat murky, so the flashing light of the *crystal* is visible underwater from 15 feet away or less.

Only proficient swimmers can probe the deeper parts of the lake, Captain Coby and 25% of his men possess the Swimming proficiency (12). Random searching takes 6d10 minutes of real time to find the *crystal*, less 1 minute for every swimmer. If the players are smart, they should figure out that a bomb planted here will cause damage only if it blows the dam and therefore must be resting close to the wall. The PCs find the *crystal* almost immediately if they limit their search to the base of the dam wall.

Two of Gecko's thugs are hiding on the opposite side of the lake. As soon as the PCs approach, they drink potions of *water breathing* and slip into the water. After 2d4 rounds, each attacks a random swimmer. Like their fellows at the Civic Offices, they have very little information to share.

Thugs, human males T2 (2): AC 9; MV 12, swim 6; T2; hp 9 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; Dex 15, roll 1d4+6 for other ability scores; SZ M; ML 13; AL LE; XP 35; dagger.

Down To the Wire: Fifteen minutes of real time before the blast, the *crystal* is hot enough to boil the surrounding water. Steam bubbles are plainly visible on the surface of the lake, giving away the location of the *crystal*.

Consequences: The *crystal* ruptures the dam when it explodes. With a thunderous crash, a wall of water from the reservoir washes into the Bay, taking a good portion of the city with it. Sixty lives are lost, and over fifty residences are destroyed.

Clue #6: Roll in the Hay (area 8)

The Clue: "Dockside" immediately narrows the location to the streets that runs along the waterfront in front of the Sandman's Bay. Dockside Avenue is a short street that faces the water. Nine taverns line the avenue: The Frowning Halfling, The Queen's Crown, Randall's Hole in the Wall, The Blue Water Tavern, Spearman's Hollow, The Moxy Maiden, Mirabelle's, Taerken's Delight, and Barnaby's Haystack.

Once the PCs reach Dockside Avenue, there are two ways to find the *crystal*. Firstly, "The Wanton Wench" is a permutation of the name The Moxy Maiden. Second, a bowsprit carved in the shape of a mermaid is mounted to the second floor wall in front of the tavern. The mermaid's arms are open in a welcoming an embrace ("her arms are open wide").

The mermaid's hair is actually painted chestnut brown. When the clue says "bales" of "golden hair," it is referring to straw. The stables behind the inn proper is the only place where the PCs can find straw nearby.

Captain Coby: "Dockside" is a dead giveaway, and Coby immediately suggests they check out Dockside Avenue. He can provide no more help until he is actually standing on the street looking at the row of taverns. After 5 minutes of real time, he points out the mermaid bowsprit if the PCs don't see it first.

Encounters: Twenty large cargo ships are docked nearby. Over three hundred sailors have descended on the bars like locusts and are consuming as much beer and food as they can during their brief shore leave. As such, every tavern on Dockside Avenue is packed.

If the PCs intend to search any of the taverns, they have to clear everyone out first. The crowds are so drunk and disorderly that this

must be done through force with the help of the city guard. Clearing out a building takes 30 minutes of real time, less 1 minute for every soldier up to twenty. The taverns have a large main room, a kitchen, a storeroom, 1d10 rooms to rent, 1d4 rooms where the owners live, and a stable. Once a building is emptied, it takes 5 minutes to search a room.

The irony here is that if the PCs correctly interpret the clue, they don't have to clear out the tavern or waste time searching the whole building. The stable is a separate building and is empty except for a few horses.

Down to the Wire: Fifteen minutes of real time before the blast, the heat from the *crystal* causes the straw to smolder; a thin stream of smoke can be seen rising from the stables.

Consequences: The real danger is not from the explosion, but the resulting fire. The blast destroys the stables and sets fire to the Moxy Maiden. Within a few rounds, the fire spreads to five of the other nine taverns. The blaze claims a total of twenty-two lives and burns the five taverns to the ground.

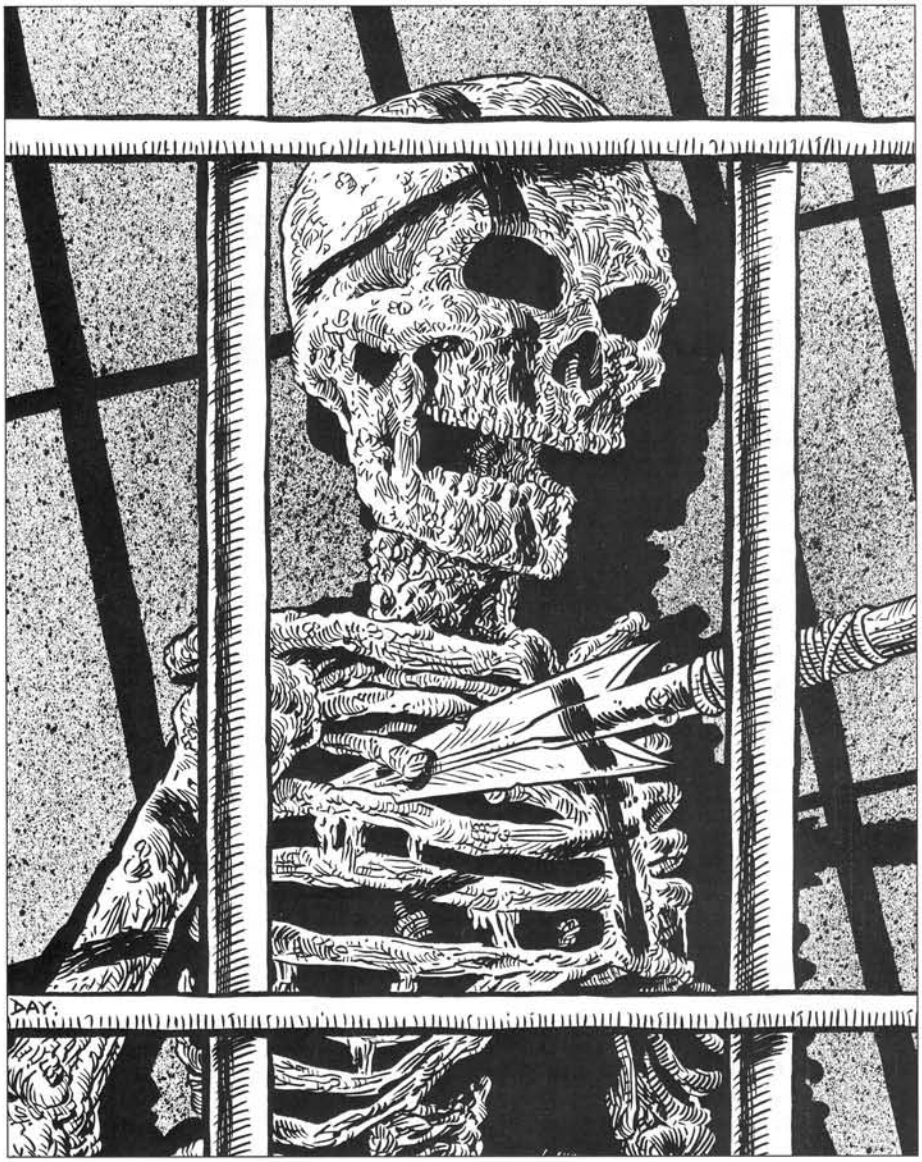
Clue #7: Trick or Treat (area 26)

The Clue: "Middle of town" is a fairly obvious hint referring to City Centre Square, which lies in the middle of the city. City Centre Square is surrounded on all four sides by fairly upscale stores. One of them is an antique store with a large, tarnished silver mirror in the display window. If the PCs keep in mind the clue "seek a reflection" as they look around the square, they notice the mirror in short order. There are no pools of water or any other reflective objects on display in any of the stores.

The mirror is coated with grime, except for the bottom corner, which has been deliberately polished clean. A bakery across the street is reflected in the clean area. Clearly visible in the bakery's window is the sign "Todd's Bakery. We specialize in halfling candies." Thus the mirror shows the "direction to minute confection." "Under the floor, under the floor" means under the basement floor, which is under the main floor. Unfortunately, there are no "square doors" in the basement or anywhere else in the bakery; however, for more details, see below.

Encounters: Todd's Bakery is an expensive place, catering to the city's wealthier residents. Todd is a tall, chunky fellow of middling years and pleasant demeanor. He is the only baker in the city who has mastered the delicate art of halfling baking, and he has cornered this small but lucrative market. He just returned to work after a long holiday, during which time Gecko broke in and planted the *fire crystal*.

Todd blanches when told of the *fire crystal* and immediately evacuates his family. If not restrained by the PCs, he runs from shop to shop around the square warning the other residents. He then returns to his bakery, grabs his strongbox, and runs for his life. He freely gives the PCs permission to search his shop and living quarters.



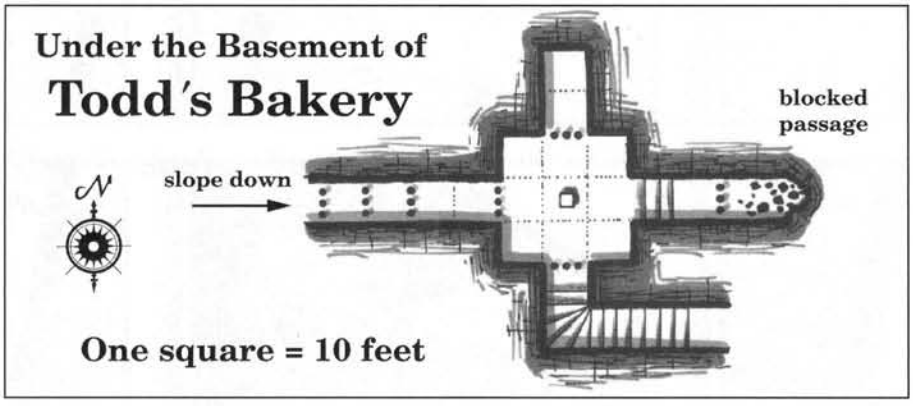
This impaled skeleton could be the key to the heroes' survival.

If the PCs can get him to stay long enough, he can interpret the remainder of the clue. There is an old sub-basement in the building that used to be a wine cellar, but it was flooded by a water leak years ago and Todd abandoned it. The trapdoor, which is square, is underneath a pile of flour sacks in his basement. He shows the PCs where it is and then quickly runs off.

If they miss Todd or don't bother to ask him for help, it takes 30 minutes of real time to find the trapdoor, less 2 minutes for each person searching. If the search includes the entire building, the time is tripled.

The sub-basement is a 20' × 20' room filled with 2 inches of water. The room is bare except for empty wine racks lining all four walls. The stairs from the basement rotted away long ago, so the PCs must lower themselves down 15 feet. Water pours into the room through a generous crack in the north wall, flows swiftly across the floor, and then drains through a hole in the southeast corner where the floor has collapsed. The water is leaking from the city sewer and has a mildly acidic smell.

As soon as the PCs open the trapdoor, they see a flickering orange *crystal* jammed into the crack in the north wall. This *crystal* is actually



a decoy, exploding as soon as anyone tampers with it. While the blast inflicts only 1d4 points of damage in a 5' radius (a successful saving throw vs. spell negates damage), it splits open the crack in the wall and releases a torrent of sewer water into the room. Everyone in the wine cellar is swept off his or her feet and washed down the drain hole in the southeast corner within seconds. PCs can avoid this fate only if they took precautions to anchor themselves to something solid beforehand, or if they have some extraordinary magic at their disposal (such as a *fly* or *levitate* spell).

PCs caught by the trap are unceremoniously dumped into a sewer line and swept away. To these PCs, read or paraphrase the following:

> A wall of water knocks you to the ground and tosses you about mercilessly. For several seconds you are dragged along like a reed in a stream. Abruptly you hear a series of loud metallic crashes like the sound of heavy gates falling, and then you are spit into a large chamber. You come to an abrupt halt in a damp, 30'-square chamber.
>
> Embedded in the middle of each wall is a sturdy iron portcullis. The floor is flooded with a foot of water. A pulsing *fire crystal* sits atop a stone pedestal in the center of the room.
>
> "Are you enjoying our little game so far?" You jump as a booming voice fills the room. It seems to be coming from every direction at once.
>
> "I thought we might raise the stakes a little. This *crystal* will explode in a few moments, and when it does you will be roasted alive—that is, unless you can somehow solve the puzzle of the gates and escape this chamber.
>
> "And, by the way, this room is directly beneath the children's hospital. Should you fail to get the *crystal* out of here in time, the entire building will collapse."

The voice is Gecko's, delivered by a series of *magic mouth* spells. The DM should give the party 15 minutes of real time to escape the room before the *crystal* explodes. Each gate is made of heavy iron, imposing a –25% penalty to all Bend Bars/Lift Gates rolls. The PCs cannot escape the blast from the *crystal* by throwing it down one of the side passages beyond the gates. The blast radius is large enough to come roaring back into the chamber. Unless the party escapes through the south gate, the blast brings down the ceiling and crushes everyone.

The East Gate: The floor descends three shallow steps before reaching the gate, and the water is 3 feet deep around the portcullis. On the other side of the bars the PCs can see a grimy skeleton impaled to the wall with a long spear. Beyond the skeleton, the tunnel has collapsed.

The gate doesn't actually reach the floor; there is a 2' gap between the floor and the bottom of the bars, so PCs can swim underneath the gate. The fallen rocks completely block the passage, so this is not a possible exit. If they desire, the PCs can retrieve the spear, which is nonmagical and has a 9'-long wooden shaft.

The North Gate: On the other side of the gate, the PCs can see that the tunnel ends after 20 feet. On the far wall is a rusted metal wheel. On the west wall 10 feet inside the gate is a lever in the upward position. The gate is locked in place. To unlock it, a PC must push down the lever with something at least 8 feet long; the spear behind the east gate would serve nicely. Once unlocked, the gate lifts easily. Turning the metal wheel on the far wall opens the west gate.

The West Gate: This is the chute that dumped the party into the room. Beyond the gate, the passage slopes steeply upward at a 45-degree angle, and water runs swiftly down. Beyond the first gate, the party can see three others. Dangling in front of the second gate and out of reach from the main chamber is a shining steel key hanging from the ceiling by a wire. If they open the first gate by turning the wheel behind the north gate, they can scramble up the slope to retrieve the key. The floor is wet and slippery, requiring a successful Climbing check at a –20% penalty. The three gates beyond do not open.

The South Gate: Beyond the gate, steps climb above the level of the water, and the passage beyond turns sharply east. The PCs can just see daylight from around the corner. This gate has an obvious keyhole and is securely held with a superior lock (imposing a –25% penalty to Open Locks rolls). The key is behind the west gate.

Clinging to the ceiling beyond the south gate is a small patch of green slime that falls on the first person to walk underneath it. Past the slime, the tunnel leads to a deserted alley behind the children's hospital.

Green slime: AC 9; MV 0; HD 2; hp 6; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg special; SA dissolves skin; SD immune to most attacks; SZ M (2' wide); ML 10; AL N; XP 65; *MM*/278.

Atop the miscellaneous junk piled behind the building is a sturdy lead coffin used to transport diseased bodies to the city morgue. If the *crystal* is closed inside the coffin, it contains the blast and no damage is done to the surroundings. Of course, the lead coffin is destroyed in the process.

Consequences: If not removed, the exploding *crystal* shatters the foundation of the children's hospital and the entire building collapses. Twenty-two children are killed along with seven doctors and three nurses.

Evelyn

Evelyn follows the PCs invisibly throughout the entire affair. Once they recover three *crystals*, she observes them from the end of the street and casts *ventriloquism* to initiate a conversation. Without preamble she waits until the PCs stop speaking and says the following:

> *After the pain of the blow is gone,*
> *I am the mark that lingers on.*
> *What am I?*

She listens to the PCs answers using her *clairaudience* spell. If they answer "a bruise," she responds, "That is correct. That is the first word." If they guess wrong she says nothing and allows them to guess once more. If they do not solve her riddle, she does not communicate with them again.

If the PCs solve the first riddle and then collect a fourth *crystal*, she addresses the party again using the same spells.

> *I'm the place in the house where none will stay,*
> *but everyone walks through*
> *when they're on their way.*
> *What am I?*

If the PCs answer "hallway," Evelyn replies, "That is correct. That is the second word." If the PCs answer "hall" or "corridor," she tells them "Close. Guess again." If they guess wrong she says nothing and allows them to guess once more. If they do not solve her riddle, she does not communicate with them again.

The two words together are "bruise hallway," a variation of Bruce Holloway.

Time's Up!

When the three hours are up, the *fire crystals* explode simultaneously. The DM must ad-lib a suitably calamitous description depending on how many *crystals* were retrieved and how the PCs disposed of them. The DM must also describe the effects of any that were missed, and what the PCs see depends on where they are in the city. The loss of life and property, if any, should be described to the PCs in detail.

Gecko has planted an eighth bomb at the city prison, set to explode at the same time as all of the others. He expects it will go unnoticed in all of the ensuing chaos. Whether or not the PCs notice depends on how well they did running Gecko's gauntlet.

If the PCs retrieved all of the crystals: After detonation, everyone notices another explosion at the south end of the city. It takes Captain Coby only an instant to figure out from the location of the blast that someone is attempting a prison break. The PCs can move there at their normal movement speed.

If the PCs missed one or two crystals: After the 3 hours are up, each PC has a 1% chance per point of Intelligence and Wisdom combined to realize there is one more explosion than there were un-recovered *crystals*.

If the PCs missed three or more crystals: After detonation, each PC has a 1% chance for each point of Wisdom to realize there were more explosions than *crystals*.

Evelyn's clues reveal the connection between the bombs and Bruiser Holloway. If the PCs catch the hint and discuss it with Captain Coby, he offers the following:

> Coby eyes grow wide and his face falls. "By the gods!" he cries. "Why didn't I notice this before? My guards are spread out all over this city and there's barely a handful left guarding the prison. This whole ordeal was a distraction for a jailbreak!"

Once the bomber's true *modus operandi* is revealed, the PCs can race to the prison and take whatever action they like.

Jail Break (area 6)

If the PCs arrive at the prison before the explosion, they can pursue whatever strategy they like. They might hide around the prison and wait for the prison break. They might move Bruiser from his cell to a more secure location. They might even disguise a PC as Bruiser and leave him as bait. If Gecko does not see them, he does not change his plans. He is watching the prison from the roof of a small warehouse near the west wall where the *fire crystal* is planted. The prison entrance is on the east wall, so Gecko might not observe the PCs if they are subtle. If he spots them, he abandons his rescue attempt and flees the scene.

The PCs might arrive at the jail right after the explosion or long after Bruiser and Gecko have made their escape.

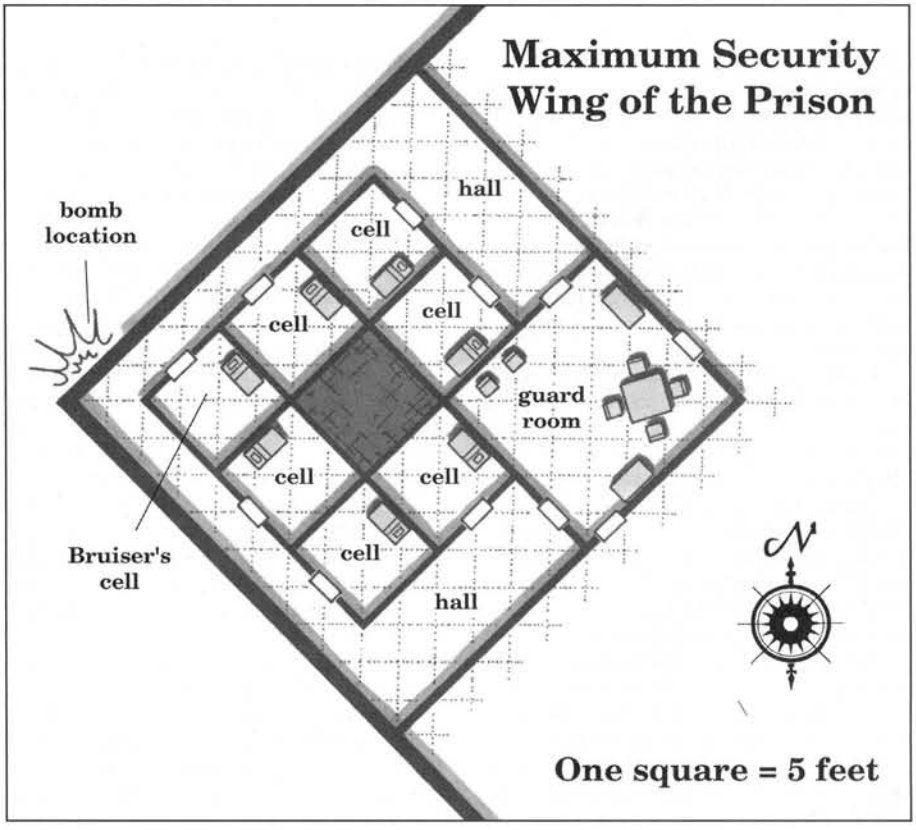
Various magical wards protect the maximum-security wing of the prison, courtesy of the city's court wizard. While these wards completely foil spells cast inside the building, Gecko bribed a city official into revealing that weakly charged magical items (like a wand with a single charge) are not negated. This same official also provided a detailed floorplan of the building and the exact location of Bruiser's cell.

Gecko then acquired a number of nearly spent magical trinkets to help release his boss. Unfortunately, he acquired them with the help of his sister Evelyn. She took pains to ensure that the magical items were, in fact, very strongly charged. The moment he sets foot inside the building, the wards sap the items of their power, leaving Gecko with nothing but a battery of useless junk and his wits.

The *fire crystal* is planted against the western corner of the prison wall, adjacent to the maximum-security wing. When it explodes, it blows a hole in the heavy stone. Gecko plans to race inside, run to the guard room, and quickly dispatch them with his magical tools. He then intends steal the keys, release Bruiser, and escape. As added insurance, he arranged for one of his men to park a horse-drawn carriage outside the west wall of the prison 5 rounds after detonation.

Unfortunately, Bruiser's notorious bad luck once again ruins the day. Just this morning he was moved to the westernmost cell, directly opposite the exploding wall. The explosion also collapses the ceiling above his cell, partially burying Bruiser in the rubble. Gecko rushes to his boss's aid, only to find that none of his magical items work. He throws Bruiser some weapons and, over the next 15 rounds, the two men manage to hold off the guards long enough to extricate themselves from the wreckage. Further, Gecko's escape carriage is held up at the South Gate and doesn't arrive for another 3 rounds.

When the PCs arrive on the scene, the DM must once again ad-lib the situation depending on what the two criminals are doing. If it



takes them much longer than 15–20 minutes to reach the scene, both men are long gone. If at all possible, Gecko and Bruiser try to avoid combat. If forced into melee, they fight only until an opportunity to escape presents itself. Gecko fights to the death and is willing to give his life if it will ensure Bruiser's escape. Bruiser, on the other hand, is interested only in saving his own skin. He freely abandons his second-in-command to get away. If reduced to 5 or fewer hit points, he drops to his knees and begs for mercy.

Bruiser Holloway, human male F5: AC 10; MV 12; hp 30 (49 at full); THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon +1 (Strength bonus); Str 16, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 14; SZ M; ML 15; AL LE; XP 270; longsword, dagger.

Gecko, human male T6: AC 6 (inside prison) or 2 (outside prison); MV 12; hp 16 (24 at full); THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; Str 12, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 10, Cha 13; SZ M; ML 18; AL LE; XP 420; *bracers of defense AC 6*, short sword, four *throwing daggers +1*.

Note that Gecko's magical items function normally once he's outside the prison walls. He abandoned the other items he brought with him when they wouldn't function.

For every 2 rounds spent fighting in or around the prison, one prison guard joins the fight on the party's side.

Prison guards, human males F2 (4 maximum): AC 5; MV 9; hp 11 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SZ M; ML 12; AL LG; chainmail, shield, longsword, dagger.

As the time for Bruiser's release draws near, Evelyn heads to the prison to watch the entire charade invisibly. She does not interfere until either Bruiser is dead or captured or Gecko is about to be killed. At that point she casts her two *sleep* spells at the PCs and the guards, followed by a *darkness 15' radius* spell. She then runs into the fray, hoping to pull Gecko away from combat in the ensuing confusion. She then casts *invisibility* on her brother, and the two flee. She saves her *charm person* spell for any particularly resilient or persistent PCs.

Evelyn, human female W4: AC 9; MV 12; hp 7; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon or spell; Str 9, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 17, Wis 13, Cha 11; SZ M; ML 14; AL N; XP 175; dagger, potion of *invisibility*, scroll of *ventriloquism* (×3) and *clairaudience* (×3).

Spells (3/2): 1st—*charm person, sleep* (×2); 2nd—*darkness 15' radius, invisibility*.

After 1d6 rounds of combat, Gecko's escape carriage finally arrives. The driver is panicked at being so late and rounds the corner in such a hurry that he drives right into the group. Everyone, including Gecko and Bruiser, must make a successful Dexterity check to avoid being run down for 1d6 points of damage. Those PCs who do manage to throw themselves out of the way must make a successful saving throw vs. petrification or lose their footing and fall to the ground, spending the entire next round regaining their feet. Those run down receive no saving throw.

If both Bruiser and Gecko avoid being run down, they hop aboard without delay and speed away at a movement rate of 14. If Gecko makes his Dexterity check and Bruiser does not, he spends a round hauling his boss onto the carriage before they can make their escape. If Bruiser makes it and Gecko fails, Bruiser hops on the carriage and abandons his second-in-command. If both Bruiser and Gecko fail their Dexterity checks, they both spend a round regaining their feet and then must win initiative the next combat round before they can mount the carriage and get away.

PCs who are still regaining their feet cannot catch the fleeing carriage. They must either overtake the vehicle or take a short cut and cut it off. The coach starts at the western edge of the prison, turns north, and heads east onto the main road, past the South Barracks (area 7) and toward the South Gate. (Although the West Gate is closer to the prison, the guards stationed there probably saw or heard

the explosion at the prison and are doubtless on alert. Besides, Bruiser and Gecko have a secret hideout east of the city.) If the PCs run directly east from the prison to the main road they intercept the carriage and have 1 round to take action before it passes them.

PCs could try to leap onto the carriage, attack the driver, destroy the carriage, stop the horses, or simply give chase. Leaping onto the carriage while it is motion requires a successful Dexterity check on 5d6 (thieves roll 4d6). Failure indicates a rough fall and 1d2 points of damage. If a character successfully boards the carriage, Bruiser and Gecko climb onto the top of the carriage to try and knock the PC off. Any action other than simply "holding on for dear life" requires a successful Dexterity check on 4d6 to avoid falling off the coach (for 1d4 points of damage). Actions requiring two hands (overbearing, wielding a two-handed sword) require a successful Dexterity check on 5d6, with failure resulting in a tumble from the carriage.

Attacking the driver has a 50% chance of stopping the carriage as he pulls on the reins. Anyone atop the carriage when it stops must make a successful Dexterity check on 4d6 or be hurled to the street for 1d6 points of damage. Those clinging to the side of the carriage by one hand must also make a roll, but the damage is only 1d4–1 points.

The carriage provides partial cover against ranged attacks, improving the driver's AC.

Carriage driver, human male F1: AC 6 (2 with cover); MV 12; F1; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SZ M; ML 7; AL LE; XP 15; short sword, whip.

The driver defends himself only if forced into melee. He must check morale after every attack whether he is actually hit or not; if he fails his Morale check, he abandons the carriage and runs away into the city to hide. If the driver is removed by whatever means, Gecko (or Bruiser, if Gecko is unable) grabs the reins and takes over after 1 round. During this time the carriage's speed slows to 8, and there is a 50% chance the horses change direction at the discretion of the DM. This could take the chase north along the main road or elsewhere.

Attacking the carriage directly is likely to succeed only if the party has some powerful magic at their disposal. The vehicle is AC 2 and can withstand 45 points of damage before falling apart. Spells like *warp wood* or *enlarge/reduce* cast at the wheels could scuttle the carriage at the DM's discretion. A cleverly cast *web* spell could clog the wheels, blind the driver, and so forth.

PCs can also direct spells or actions at the horses. The animals are susceptible to *sleep, spook, grease, phantasmal force, darkness 15' radius, scare,* and *animal friendship* spells. Depending on their use, these spells might spook the horses, causing them to throw the driver (25% chance), overturn the carriage (25% chance), change direction (25% chance), or buck and rear for 1 round before the driver regains control (25% chance). A simple *cantrip* can untie the horses from the vehicle, causing the carriage to roll until it strikes something!

Overturning the carriage causes 1d6 points to anyone clinging to the outside and 1d4 points of damage to anyone within. If the horses are released and the carriage runs into something, everyone on or inside the carriage suffers 1d4 points of damage and is jostled and unable to act for 1 round.

The carriage and its occupants move at top speed (MV 14) for the South Gate. Unless held up by the PCs, the criminals force their way through and escape to the countryside.

Fire Crystals

Fire crystals are basically *fireballs* held in stasis. The *crystals* resemble orange gemstones that flicker like candles in a stiff breeze. As the stasis field degrades, the *crystal* warms until it becomes searing hot in the last few minutes before detonation.

When the stasis field around the *crystal* expires, the *fireball* spell detonates, inflicting 6d6 points of damage to anyone in the 20'-radius area of effect. A successful saving throw halves the damage. Locking the *crystal* in a box cannot stop the explosion; it simply destroys the container when it explodes. Burying it has little effect. If several *crystals* are in the same area when they detonate, the area of effect is not increased, but the damage is cumulative.

For low-level parties, the only means for dealing with the *crystals* is to safely dispose of them. Throwing them into the bay is a good solution, as long as no bridges or boats are nearby. Another option is to leave a *crystal* in a known area and then evacuate the residents. This at least minimizes the loss of life. Dropping a *crystal* into the sewer also alleviates damage to the citizens, although the explosion collapses some of the sewer tunnels. In truly desperate circumstances, the PCs can try to throw a *crystal* into the air at the moment of detonation, hoping they can hurl it higher than the radius of the explosion. The timing requires a successful Intelligence check.

Casting *dispel magic* on the *crystal* brings down the stasis field and detonates it immediately. Dropping a *crystal* into a *bag of holding* or any other extra-dimensional space contains the explosion but destroys the item in the process. A *horn of blasting, shatter* spell, or 10 points of blunt weapon damage collapses the stasis field and triggers the *fireball* explosion.

Tying Up Loose Ends

There are several possible endings to this adventure. Regardless of where the PCs are, when it comes time to conclude, the duke of Red Fern tracks them down.

If the PCs missed three or more *crystals*, even if they prevented the jail break, read or paraphrase the following:

> The Duke of Red Fern runs, huffing and puffing, around the corner. Following him is a motley group of councillors and city guards. The duke sees you and Captain Coby and stops in his tracks, gritting his teeth. After a moment's pause he stomps toward you, arms flailing wildly. "Do you know how many people died today because of your incompetence?"
>
> Captain Coby's mouth opens and shuts like a fish gasping for breath, but he is unable to answer the duke. "I am appalled, Captain! Faced with a crisis of this magnitude, you turned to these sell-swords, and look what happened!" The duke reaches out and tears the officer's sash from his uniform. The former captain looks down at the ground, ashamed.
>
> "Come with me. We have a disaster to deal with." And with that the duke stomps off. Coby follows silently.

Each character receives 50 XP for each *fire crystal* successfully neutralized. This is the end of their adventure, and they will have no further contact with the duke or Coby. They are neither persecuted nor lauded for anything they did.

If the party missed only one or two crystals, the duke is grateful for their help, but still disappointed with the captain and says as much. He rewards the party with a bag of 500 gp for their troubles, and each PC receives 200 XP for each *crystal* neutralized.

If the PCs recovered all of the *crystals*, read or paraphrase the following:

> The Duke of Red Fern runs, huffing and puffing, around the corner. Following him is a motley group of councillors and city guards. The duke sees you and stops in his tracks, grinning broadly. After a moment's pause he walks toward you.
>
> "Captain Coby!" he thunders. "You're to be commended. You and your brave friends have saved the lives of my citizens!"

The duke gives Captain Coby a crushing bearhug and shakes each PC's hand vigorously. He gives the PCs "an inadequate token"

Tour of Red Fern

The city of Red Fern has long been the hub of trade and ship travel along this busy section of coastline, though the area was once nothing more than a cluster of merchant warehouses huddled along the southern shores of Sandman's Bay. Many of those old warehouses still stand, now belonging to powerful and wealthy families, namely the Gherrens, the Maneras, and the Fedoruks. These are the three founding merchant families of Red Fern.

Many prominent businesses have since established themselves here, including Riddle's Tobacco Factory (maker of the king's favorite cigars), Lord Bob's Clothiers (which spins the finest cloth in the entire duchy), and the illustrious Warren's Jewels (designer of Lady Bagatella's "breathing bloodstone" tiara). Red Fern boasts four dwarven master-smiths, who have stubbornly set up their businesses on different corners of the same intersection in a fiercely competitive rivalry. Smith's Corner is an excellent place to purchase metal-goods. The city's only human smith wisely located his business far away from Smith's Corner.

But Red Fern is not merely a place of commerce. The city is well regarded for its thirteen colleges and universities. College Town, as it is locally known, is a small walled compound where the city's houses of higher learning are located. The walls, designed by the mage and engineer Sullius Crassius (who maintains a tower in the city), are more decorative than practical in any defensive sense. They are nevertheless true architectural wonders—a fusion of magic and stonework. The entire area west of College Town to the main road is known as the Students' District, where many booksellers, scribes, and researchers make their living. The majority of the city's student population also lives here in rooming houses.

The city is also home to many learned sages, who ply their trade along Sages' Way, which runs from the main road to the War Tower. The street is lined with all manner of erudite and scholarly men and women. It is said that if a question cannot be answered on Sages' Way, then it has no answer. The city's foremost expert on history, Harriet Helmswood, makes a deliberate point of not locating herself on the street. She firmly believes that such a commercial atmosphere corrupts true learning.

The city enjoys relatively little crime, thanks in no small part to its enlightened leadership and strong military presence. There are two full barracks in Red Fern and a large complement of soldiers. It is said that no prisoner has ever escaped the city's prison. The seat of the city's government is, of course, Government Center, which lies on the north side of the river at the end of Sages' Way. Here one can find the Office of Laws, The City Congress, The Ministry of Defense, Commerce Hall, and The Civic Offices where the duke himself conducts his business. Directly across the river is Temple Street, where the city's main churches are located.

Visitors can find many amusements in Red Fern. The famous Dockside Avenue is home to the nine most boisterous taverns in the duchy. The party here begins at supper and lasts well past sunset. Many famous bards, dancers, and entertainers perform here nightly. Directly east one can find the Brewers' Union, Brewer's Square, and Banshee's Beers, maker of the infamous Dark Mushroom Stout.

The city also enjoys public parklands inside the city walls for the enjoyment of citizens and visitors. The Whispering Vale is said to be inhabited by water nixies who will grant a wish if one throws a copper piece into the river. From Fedoruk Park, one can take a trail up the hillside to Overlook Point and its spectacular vista, as seen from the shores of Red Fern Reservoir. One must be careful, however, not to take the wrong path and stray into the private vineyards of the Warren family. Because of a recent spate of vandalism on the grape crop, they are heavily patrolled and trespassers are not tolerated. The public is, however, quite welcome to visit the winery where excellent vintages are for sale.

Visitors interested in purchasing the varied wares of Red Fern's shopkeepers are directed to the Gold District. Also on every seventh day, the marketplace around the city well abounds with all manner of goods.

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of his appreciation: a bag of 500 gp and his diamond ring of office worth 1,500 gp. Each PC also receives 200 XP for each neutralized *crystal*—a total of 1,400 XPs.

If the PCs uncovered the jail break but Bruiser escaped, the duke is annoyed but not outraged. He casts a withering glance of disapproval at the captain, but nothing further comes of it.

If the party managed to re-capture Bruiser or prevent his escape, the duke gushes with praise. He offers no further monetary rewards but does invite them to dine with him at the City Offices in two nights' time. At the banquet he introduces the PCs to a number of prominent people in Red Fern. This could be a lucrative source of both information and employment for the party.

If Gecko escapes, he seeks revenge against the PCs, especially if Bruiser is still in custody. He might even attempt another jail break (although much less elaborate). He might also weave an intricate assassination plot where he implicates the PCs in the murder of the duke. Whether or not Evelyn survives has little bearing on his plans.

If Gecko is captured, PCs can learn that he obtained the *fire crystals* from a wizard who lives in a remote tower. The wizard, exiled from Red Fern years ago, has his own reasons to despise the local authorities. In exchange for his and Bruiser's freedom, Gecko is willing to share what he knows about this wizard.

If Evelyn survives, she continues to thwart her brother's attempts to break Bruiser out of prison. If Gecko was killed and Evelyn perceives the PCs as being responsible, she continues to trouble them in future adventures. Her revenge might not be as elaborate, but she is just as persistent as her brother. Ω

them! I look forward to springing this adventure on my unsuspecting players. It will be a welcome diversion from the ho-hum orcs and goblins found so often in lower-level adventures.

I've been so busy with my life that I no longer have the time to create my own adventures, but if I can keep finding surprising and fun adventures like "Bad Seeds" to run, I think I'll be able to stick with it.

Kudos to Mr. Carter (and the always superb Diesel for the detailed maps)! Also, thanks for pointing out possible continuing adventures at the end of the module. I'll hunt those issues down and will probably have my next few Saturdays taken care of!

Mike Griffith
Wind Gap, PA

Correcting Blatant Apathy

I have been playing the AD&D game for approximately twenty years and been purchasing *DUNGEON Adventures* since Issue #38. (Yes, I know I am a late starter.) Although on many occasions my brother and I (we alternate the role of DM in our group) have discussed the attributes of our ideal module, I have never actually taken time to express my opinion to the people with any influence. This letter seeks to rectify this blatant apathy.

Our group of players, all of whom have been playing for 15 to 20 years, are most definitely the "old school." Hack and slash, coupled with an imaginative mix of interesting locales, villains, and monsters are very much the order of the day. Of course, a strong plotline with opportunities to roleplay is essential to a good adventure. However, overly complex or convoluted plots where PCs are channeled down a strict course of action to make the plot fit are not suitable for *DUNGEON Adventures*. Let individual DMs design their own if they want them in their campaign. What I want from *DUNGEON Adventures* and Wizards of the Coast in general are good quality, well thought out generic adventures that can fit into most campaign worlds. All of my top ten *DUNGEON Adventures* modules possess these qualities. They are: "Hopeful Dawn," by Gary Lai (Issue #41), "Goblin Fever," by Randy Maxwell (Issue #46), "Melody," by Leonard and Ann Wilson (Issue #48), "To Cure a Kingdom," by John A. Hartshorne (Issue #57), "Seeking Bloodsilver," by Chris Perkins (Issue #59), "Shards of the Day," by Randy Maxwell (Issue #60), "Bzallin's Blacksphere," by Chris Perkins (Issue #64), "Operation Manta Ray," by Paul F. Culotta, "The Winter Tapestry," by Stephen C. Klauk (Issue #78), and "Cloudkill," by Jeff Fairbourn (Issue #79).

I'm currently running a BIRTHRIGHT® campaign. The PCs, acting as agents of Roesone, have just completed "Seeking Bloodsilver" and are now attempting to extract a Roesonean operative from the port of Mieres ("Operation Manta Ray"). Both adventures have "corny" plots (retrieving an artifact or rescuing an NPC) yet are still first-rate scenarios that I would have been proud to write. They are both useable with little or no additional work but can be expanded if necessary.

Now the down side. Please can we have no more adventures for other gaming systems (for example, "Deepstrike" in Issue #78). Personally, I feel cheated if one is included.

I also agree with readers who find some of your low-level modules "quirky." Starting a new party in an original way is the hardest thing to do as a DM. What we need from *DUNGEON Adventures* are good quality, gritty modules that'll keep players on the edges of their seats. Quirkiness is all right for one encounter, not a whole module.

A few comments on Issue #79:

"Keep for Sale" – Good. A low-level adventure in the mould outlined above.

"Bad Seeds" – Very good. A module that the players would be involved in before they even realized it.

"Cloudkill" – Excellent, and the best of the bunch. A simple hook ("Something is polluting our skies"), but an imaginative plot that is easy to follow, good villains, and a well thought out location plus a short lesson in smelting. Top notch.

"The Akriloth" – Well put together but not really my thing.

"The Best Laid Plans" – Very poor. Yes, I know it's a Side Trek adventure, but that does not mean quality has to suffer.

continued on page 86

RPGA Announces New Magazine: The Living Greyhawk™ Journal

This August, the RPGA® Network will unveil an exciting new magazine: the *Living Greyhawk Journal*. The *Journal*, a 32-page bimonthly publication, will contain updates on the Network's exciting new shared-world DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® campaign, articles of interest to the general GREYHAWK® fan, and exciting features set in the popular WORLD OF GREYHAWK® campaign setting.

Regular features will reveal campaign developments, highlight important campaign locations, update classic monsters and villains to 3rd Edition formats, and explore new realms and peoples of Oerth.

The *Living Greyhawk Journal* will be available to RPGA Guild-level members six times a year. This is in addition to six issues of the updated and expanded *POLYHEDRON® Magazine*. The *Journal* allows the RPGA to reach one of its most important goals in recent memory—to supply periodicals to RPGA members each and every month of the year.

The Journal will be edited by Erik Mona, RPGA Publications Coordinator and member of the Circle of Six, the ruling body of the RPGA's *Living Greyhawk* campaign. Mona edited several issues of the *Oerth Journal*, a popular online GREYHAWK fanzine, and contributed to the *Living Greyhawk Gazetteer*, a forthcoming sourcebook from Wizards of the Coast that serves as the creative backbone of the *Living Greyhawk* campaign.

Submission queries are currently being accepted. Send all article ideas to Erik Mona at **polyhedron@wizards. com**. The RPGA Network pays competitive rates for articles printed in the *Living Greyhawk Journal*.

A petrified behir alerts heroes to even greater dangers ahead.

DIVISIONS OF THE MIND

BY CHARLES C. REED

Never strike a bargain with a beholder

Artwork by Paul Daly
Cartography by Diesel

Charles says: "Writing this adventure was difficult but fun. It juxtaposes the standard dungeon crawl with an unusual adventuring environment inhabited by denizens that should surprise even the most seasoned players."

"Divisions of the Mind" is an AD&D® adventure for 4–6 characters of levels 8–12 (about 50 total levels). The characters are sent on a subterranean raid to stop a menacing beholder. Circumstances become complicated, however, with the discovery of an illithid stronghold inhabited by an ulitharid (noble mind flayer) with a split personality. *The Illithiad* supplement provides useful background information on mind flayers but is not needed to run the adventure.

For the Dungeon Master

The beholder Akwest Babasak is currently expanding his lair, using his *disintegrate* eye to create new passages. Recently, Akwest unearthed a huge underground cavern, in the center of which floated a citadel of faintly glowing crystal. Intrigued, he approached the citadel, eager to claim whatever treasure it might hold or subjugate any who would dwell within. The beholder was forced to withdraw, however, for as he neared the citadel his levitation power failed.

Temporarily frustrated, Akwest returned to his lair and devised a plan to lure a party of surface-dwelling adventurers to investigate the citadel. Despite his natural prejudice toward other life forms, he realized that adventurers from above should be resourceful enough to accomplish what he wants.

The nearby town of Ammath is a small but prosperous community of just over 200 inhabitants. One evening, Akwest ventured to the surface and proceeded to Ammath, where he created mayhem with his *disintegrate*, *fear*, and *telekinesis* eyes. During the "assault," Akwest was careful not to cause too much destruction or slay any inhabitants. His goal was to create a stir, not bring down the town or too heavy a vengeance upon himself. The attack completed, he then returned to his lair to wait for the inevitable "heroic adventurers" to be called in. Akwest made provisions to lure adventurers to the crystal citadel, where he intends to make his appearance and offer them a bargain. He plans to give his word not to bother Ammath any more if the PCs agree to explore the floating citadel and find out who or what built it and what is inside.

The crystal citadel is, in fact, an ancient illithid sanctuary. It was constructed hundreds of years ago by Shannotsuul, an ulitharid whose personality was attacked by a human mind due to short-circuited psionic seals. (See *The Illithiad* supplement or the "Psionic Seals" sidebar for information on psionic seals and

circuitry.) The personality that has surfaced and dominated the ulitharid mind is Shannon Canteel, a former human wizard and adventurer. Shannon remembers her capture and ceremorphosis at the hands of the illithids and bears no end of malice toward them, yet she is permanently trapped within the body of her enemy. Shannotsuul has one goal: revenge against the illithids. She seeks to harm the illithid cause whenever and wherever she can. The crystal citadel, built with the help of renegade alhoon servants, has served as a secure headquarters from which she ventures forth to fight the illithids in the Underdark. To complicate matters, the ulitharid mind (named Redatsuul) is not entirely quiescent. This produces a strange mix of illithid and human behavior. While Shannon's goals do not sit well with the illithid portion of her mind, the Shannon personality remains in charge and works toward the downfall of illithids with single-minded determination. To extend her life beyond the normal ulitharid span and to keep the ulitharid's true personality at bay, Shannotsuul regularly ingests a special fluid produced by fungal growths melded with neural tissues from strange subterranean creatures. She avoids total darkness, which is unusual for illithids. While the illithid eye is not made to operate well in bright light, Shannotsuul is uncomfortable in total darkness and lives in a citadel that radiates continual soft light. She endures the dark only on missions against the illithids. Her eyes are unique for illithids (a physiological side effect of the psionic seals) and operate equally well in light or darkness. Attempts by Shannon to return to her former human state have met with failure—the Redatsuul personality is too intimately entwined with Shannon's to allow such change. The shame Shannotsuul feels at her form shows in the heavy veil she normally wears, removing it only to eat and to infiltrate illithid lairs.

The citadel itself is enclosed in a shield that repels magic and psionics, which is why Akwest's levitation failed. Getting in should not prove too difficult for resourceful characters. Shannotsuul, if approached correctly, might not be ill-disposed toward adventurers visiting the citadel. PCs who charge in with spells and swords blazing, however, are in for a serious fight.

What the Characters Know

Play begins with the PCs becoming aware of problems in Ammath. This could be as simple as seeing a posting on a wall outside of an inn or hearing a rumor from a traveler who just passed through Ammath. The PCs might also have just arrived in Ammath, hoping for a quiet night or two between adventures. Conversely, Ammath might be the hometown of one of the PCs, and he or she is returning home for a long-awaited reunion. A personal plea for help from members of the PC's family or Granny Wexton (see below) might add a note of urgency to the expedition.

Action in Ammath

The PCs arrive in Ammath two days after the beholder's attack. Justin Aldefer, the mayor, and Dorothea Wexton, the oldest inhabitant of Ammath, act as spokespeople for the town. Justin is a slight man in his fifties with a fringe of red hair and an analytical, shrewd mind. Granny Wexton seems to be nothing more than a diminutive village nanny. She is 108 years old and gets about with the help of a cane. She lives in a small cottage that always smells of baked bread. She often uses the endearments "butterpat," "breadcrumb," or "biscuit" when speaking to people.

The town has scraped together a reward amounting to 1,000 gp per PC, along with several magical potions donated by a local alchemist (2–3 potions of whatever type the DM determines could best suit the party). The town provides any standard supplies the PCs need free of charge. PCs are put up at a local inn or in a PC's old home if appropriate to the adventure.

PCs learn that the beholder came from the eastern forest just after nightfall. They can trace the path the beholder took through town, observing damage to many structures caused by *disintegrate* rays. Locals testify that the beholder sent droves of people screaming in panic. Several people were wounded in the riot to escape the beholder, but nobody perished. Astute PCs might find this puzzling. People in town know that the eastern woods are home to fell creatures, but except for an attack by a huge reptilian beast (a behir) about eight years ago, all has been quiet. The citizens have been keeping a nightly vigil since the attack, but so far they have spotted nothing. There are rumors of caves existing somewhere in the forest, but nobody from town has been foolish enough to search for them.

Overstaying Their Welcome

If PCs choose to remain in town for more than a few days, Akwest grows frustrated that no one has come looking for him. After three days, Akwest sends a pair of *charmed* manticores to assault the town. They approach from the east by air and attack anyone outside with several volleys of tail spikes, then land in the town square. Akwest would have sent three manticores, but one was unaffected by the *charm* and the beholder was forced to slay it. If PCs are on the move by the third day, they meet the manticores in the forest and no town attack occurs. (See "Into the Woods" below.)

Psionic Seals

Psionic seals are analogous to tattoos in form and receptacles in purpose. The psionic discipline Imprint Psionic Circuitry allows illithids to brand objects with psionic seals designed to contain psionic power. It is possible to brand a living being with a psionic seal, allowing the individual so marked to call upon the power stored within the seal.

The ulitharid Redatsuul became enamored of psionic seals and had several placed upon his person. The seals' circuitry accidentally crossed, however. The seals not only shorted out but also revived the human personality that the ulitharid supposedly obliterated when he underwent ceremorphosis. (See *The Illithiad* for details.)

Note that if Shannotsuul suffers damage in combat exceeding half of her hit points or is reduced to below half her normal PSP total, there is a 5% chance that the psionic seals on her are damaged enough to cease functioning and restore the Redatsuul personality, eliminating all vestiges of the human wizard Shannon Canteel. If reduced to one fourth of her hit points or brought to 0 PSPs, the chance increases to 10%.

Manticores (2): AC 4; MV 12, fly 18 (E); HD 6+3; hp 35, 31; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d8; SA tail spikes; SZ H; ML 13; Int low (6); AL LE; XP 975; *MM*/246.

Into the Woods

The forest lies less than a mile east of town and is a mix of old and young growth. It is relatively safe at the outskirts, and townsfolk routinely cut wood and pick berries and nuts there. Only a few little-used trails venture deep into the woods. As the PCs approach the forest, they spot an arrow made of stones pointing east. The arrow, left near a trail, was made by Akwest to lead adventurers to his lair. At two miles and four miles into the woods are more arrows, also pointing east along the trail. PCs know few villagers travel this deeply into the forest, so the presence of the arrows might make them wonder. The entrance to Akwest's caverns lies six miles down the trail, at the base of a rocky hill covered in pines. Along the trail there is an encounter with the manticores. They are out hunting and do not hesitate to attack humans or demihumans. If Akwest has already sent two manticores to town, PCs instead encounter the petrified and shattered remains of the third manticore.

Manticores (3): hp 35*, 32, 31*; otherwise same statistics as above. The manticores with 35 and 31 hp are the same ones encountered in "Overstaying Their Welcome" above.

Caverns of Akwest Babasak

Following the trail leads to Akwest's caves, six miles into the forest. The entrance is set into the base of a rocky hill covered in pine trees. The caverns are natural limestone and vary from 7 feet to 30 feet high. The walls are rough but slick with moisture. In areas Akwest has recently excavated (see area **15**), the walls are smooth and dry. In the natural areas, patches of harmless fluorescent fungus grow, shedding an eerie light.

Akwest spends most of his time touring the tunnels, on the lookout for possible prey or intruders. Every monster in the cave complex knows of Akwest and acknowledges his overlordship. None of them would willingly fight the beholder. If *charmed* to attack the beholder, the monster receives a saving throw to break the *charm*, and if successful, flees. If it fails, it suffers a –3 penalty to attack rolls due to fear.

Akwest is greedy, arrogant, quick to anger, and intelligent. He has lived in these caves for over eighteen years and considers them his own and all within his slaves, servants, or next meal. Akwest always seeks to deal from a position of power, hence the initial attack on Ammath. He speaks Common and Undercommon, and he can communicate at least in rudimentary form with every intelligent monster in the caves. During the adventure, Akwest keeps with him a potion of *invisibility* that he carries via his *telekinesis* eye. Any noise or commotion PCs make in the tunnels has a 1-in-3 chance of alerting Akwest of their presence. He quaffs the potion once he knows PCs are in the caves, then finds and quietly follows them at a distance of 60–80 feet. If he is detected at any time, see the "Let's Make a Deal" section below.

1. Entrance.

> Ahead of you looms a tall hill covered in fir trees. At the base of the hill is a rock-strewn cave mouth about 12 feet wide and 20 feet tall. It angles rather steeply down into the hill until a gradual bend obscures your sight. A cool breeze issues from the cave, smelling of dampness. On the ground is another arrow made of stones. It points directly into the cave mouth.

Like the arrows found in the woods, this arrow is meant to point the PCs in the right direction. PCs who shout down the cave mouth do not receive any kind of response.

2. Trapper Menace. This section of the corridor is home to a trapper. It stretches from wall to wall and is 20 feet long. The beast attempts to engulf the first two PCs who walk over it. Note that it will not release victims until it is reduced to 1 hp or killed. Hidden underneath the trapper is a pile of bones, a suit of chainmail sized for a dwarf, a warhammer, a metal tube containing a priest scroll (*cure blindness* and *air walk* written at 10th level), and a necklace of silver set with a garnet worth 150 gp.

Trapper: AC 3; MV 3; HD 12; hp 56; THAC0 9; #AT 4+; Dmg 6 + AC of victim; SZ H; ML 11; Int high (14); AL N; XP 3,000; *MM*/229.

3. Dismantled Arrow.

> Several small piles of stones sit in the center of this three-way intersection. They have been arranged into simple geometric shapes and appear to have been moved recently.

The stones are the remains of another arrow placed by Akwest. The arrow was moved less than an hour ago by the quaggoth in area **9**.

4. Arrow Pointing the Way. Another arrow of small stones points south.

5. Guardians of the Spring. This area is inhabited by cloakers. Akwest allows them to lair here so they can act as guards for the healing spring in area **6**. The cloakers rarely venture out except to hunt in the corridors or surrounding woods by night. The cloakers are continually emitting their first level of subsonic moan, their equivalent of a cat's purr of contentment since they have just digested a meal of quaggoth from area **9**. Note that while in the corridors, the subsonic moan is too weak to cause the full effects as described in the *Monstrous Manual*™ tome, but the moan can cause general unease. Once PCs enter the cave, read or paraphrase the following:

> You enter a round cave filled with large boulders and stalagmites. Three other tunnel mouths wind away into darkness. You hear the faint trickle and splash of water nearby. A sudden movement in the cave catches your eye, and you hear a flapping noise. There it is again!

One of the three cloakers in the cave persists in the first level of moan, causing unease and a –2 penalty to attack and damage rolls, while the other two attempt to maneuver to attack the party from opposite flanks. The boulders in the cave give the cloakers 50% cover (–4 bonus to AC). They require 1 round to maneuver into position before attacking. After 2 rounds, the third cloaker begins to emit the third level of moan, attempting to catch as many PCs as possible in the effect. If one is slain or if their morale breaks, any remaining cloakers emit either the *fear* or *hold person* moans, then flee under cover of their *manipulate shadows* ability, creating *mirror images* to confuse characters. Scattered around the floor are 255 cp, 310 sp, 159 gp, bits of rusted armor, a medium shield with a heraldic device of a local nobleman (a PC with the Heraldry NWP or familiarity with the area might recognize it), and a ceramic bottle containing a potion of *heroism*.

Cloakers (3): AC body 3, tail 1; MV 1, fly 15 (D); HD 6; hp 36, 31, 28; THAC0 15; #AT 2 + special; Dmg 1d6/1d6 + special; SA moan; SD *manipulate shadows*; SZ L; ML 14; Int high (14); AL CN; XP 1,400; *MM*/44.

6. Healing Spring. A clear, cold spring trickles from the south wall and forms a small pool. The spring radiates Necromantic magic. The first PC drinking from the spring heals 2d6 points of damage immediately and heals any remaining wounds at five times the normal rate for the next week. After one PC drinks, the spring loses its potency for a week. If the first drink of water is carried away from the spring, it loses its potency within 1 hour. This spring is the reason Akwest originally chose these caves for his lair. With a sip from the spring, he can replace lost eye stalks rapidly.

Growing at the dead end of the passage is a patch of blue fluorescent fungus. The fungus is harmless but can be scraped off and collected as a portable light source. The radius of the fluorescent light is 15 feet.

7. Black Pudding. A black pudding has wandered up from deeper levels of the Underdark and has attached to the ceiling at this intersection. Any movement below causes it to drop. The tunnel heading east (off the map) continues for several hundred feet before reaching the quaggoth lair and could be developed by the DM as an extension of the adventure. (Otherwise, the passage can be considered a dead end.) The pudding has no treasure.

Black pudding: AC 6; MV 6; HD 10; hp 48; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 3d8; SA corrosive touch; SD unaffected by most weapons and spells; SZ L; ML special; Int non (0); AL N; XP 2,000; *MM*/297.

8. Quaggoth Lookout. A lone quaggoth squats by the western wall of this intersection. He is on lookout for the raiding party in area **9**. If he sees movement or light heading his way, he yells loudly, summoning all of the nearby quaggoths in 1d4 rounds. He wields a stone ax (Dmg 1d6) and has a necklace made of bone beads worth 5 gp.

Quaggoth: AC 6; MV 12; HD 2+2; hp 11; THAC0 19; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1d4/1d4 or by weapon (1d6 with stone ax); SA berserk rage; SD immune to poison; SZ L; ML 16; Int low (5); AL N; XP 175; *MM*/298.

9. Quaggoth Encampment. A quaggoth hunting party is camped here. The quaggoths have collected eight giant toad carcasses and recently lost three scouts to the cloakers in area **5**. They are currently dining on megalocentipedes before heading for the tunnel home (in area **7**).

If the lookout in area **8** sounds the alarm, the quaggoths hastily prepare for combat. If caught by surprise, they are hunched over partially devoured centipedes. Most of them wield stone axes or clubs (1d6 points of damage). One quaggoth uses a spear smeared with megalocentipede venom. The first successful attack with it causes an additional 3d6 points of damage. A successful saving throw vs. poison indicates half damage. The jald's ax head is made of smoky quartz and is worth 50 gp. The jald wears durable leather armor made from toad hides.

Quaggoths (16): AC 6; MV 12; HD 2+2; hp 11 each; THAC0 19; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1d4/1d4 or by weapon (see above); SA berserk rage; SD immune to poison; SZ L; ML 16; Int low (5); AL N; XP 175; *MM*/298.

Quaggoth leader (jald): AC 4; MV 12; HD 3+3; hp 19; THAC0 19; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1d4/1d4 or by weapon +1 (Strength bonus); SA berserk rage; SD immune to poison; SZ L; ML 16; Int low (7); AL N; XP 270; *MM*/298.

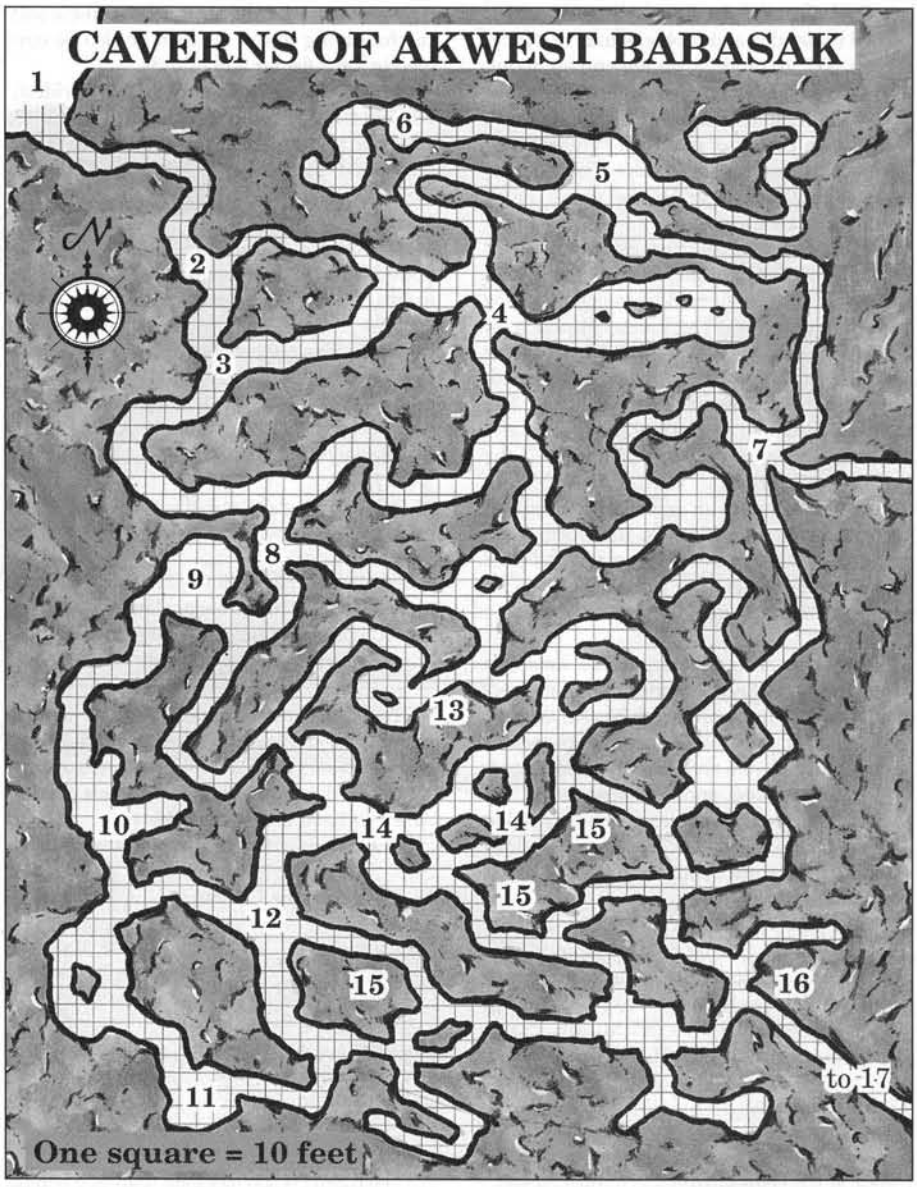
10. Petrified Behir.

> Out of the darkness a lithe serpentine form appears. It is unmoving and glistens with condensed moisture. Upon closer inspection you can see the large, multi-legged reptilian beast is fashioned of stone. Several of its legs are missing, and nasty gashes have been opened on its flanks. The whole statue is twisted and contorted, apparently captured in a moment of agony.

This is the remains of a behir that dueled with Akwest for possession of the caverns several years ago. The behir wanted the caverns as a home to prey on Ammath, but Akwest was reluctant to give up his abode. Both were badly injured in the fight. The behir suffered serious wounds and lost four legs to disintegration, finally succumbing to the beholder's petrifying eye.

The petrified behir radiates Alteration magic. If it is successfully turned back to flesh, it immediately roars, retreats from the PCs, and attempts to escape from the caverns. It does not wish to continue the fight with Akwest in its wounded condition. The behir's roar alerts Akwest to the adventurers' presence. The behir has no treasure.

Behir (wounded and petrified): AC 4; MV 15; HD 12; hp 62 (currently 11); THAC0 9; #AT 2 or 4 (due to missing legs); Dmg 2d4/1d4+1 or 2d4/1d3 (×3); SA *lightning bolt*; SD immune to electricity, poison; SZ G; ML 15; Int low (7); AL NE; XP 7,000; *MM*/20.



11. Akwest's Lair.

> The tunnel widens into a gruesome chamber. Skulls, hollowed-out carapaces, and bones adorn the walls. Rubble and other debris litter the floor. Glints of silver and gold stand out among the rubbish. Hanging from a large horned skull is a leather sack, and a pouch of iridescent material dangles from the proboscis of a stag beetle shell mounted on the wall. Several stalactites are covered in fluorescent fungus, bathing the cavern in a sickly green light.

This chamber serves as Akwest's lair. If adventurers have not already attracted the attention of Akwest, there is a 25% chance that the beholder is here, gloating over his treasures and trophies.

The skulls of over a dozen different monster types and the carapaces or shells of several others adorn the walls and floor. Each is the remains of a former adversary that Akwest bested. Additionally, the bones and possessions of several long-deceased human and demihuman adventurers litter the lair.

Akwest remains silent as PCs investigate the lair but protests loudly and becomes visible if any objects are taken. Three rusted suits of armor—two sets of human-sized chainmail and one suit of dwarf-sized banded armor—

are scattered over the floor. A small shield is buried under dirt and rubble. A total of 245 cp, 689 sp, 337 gp, and 78 pp are strewn about. The sack hanging from the skull contains four potions: a ceramic bottle with *oil of fumbling*, a thick green potion of *vitality*, a syrupy sweet potion of *water breathing*, and a *philter of glibness* in a tiny water skin. Hidden under a rock on the floor are three scrolls in corroded metal tubes: a magical scroll (*irritation* and *shatter*, written at 9th level), a clerical scroll (*free action*, written at 13th level), and a *scroll of protection from earth elementals*. The iridescent pouch on the beetle shell was once owned by Rolf the Dancing Bull, an adventurer from Ammath who disappeared about fifteen years ago. The pouch is made of rare tropical snake skin, and Rolf often wore it very conspicuously. If the hometown option is used, the PC from Ammath can make an Intelligence check to recognize the pouch as Rolf's. It is worth 60 gp and contains a topaz (300 gp), a piece of pink coral (100 gp), a tiger eye agate (80 gp), and a small amethyst (50 gp).

12. Storoper. A lone storoper has made its home in the northwest corner of the intersection. Akwest's tunneling work has stirred up a great deal of prey, allowing the storoper to grow to largest size and actually shed a seed, which grows into another storoper in six weeks. The seed resembles a small boulder. The storoper eagerly attacks anything besides Akwest. Its gizzard contains 15 pp and seven bloodstones (50 gp each).

Storoper: AC 0; MV 3; HD 6; hp 48; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 5d4; SA strands, poison; SD immune to normal missiles and lightning; half damage from cold; SW –4 to saving throws vs. fire; MR 80%; SZ M; ML 15; Int exceptional (15); AL CE; XP 10,000; *MM*/304.

13. Mustard Jelly.

> A natural pillar of rock stretches from the floor to the ceiling, which is almost 30 feet overhead. The whole area is suffused in a warm golden glow, apparently emanating from the far side of the rock pillar. The welcoming illumination flickers like firelight.

A mustard jelly has lived in the caves for years, feeding off of the fluorescent fungus whenever prey was scarce. Over time, the jelly has acquired its own light-producing properties and gives off a warm golden glow, providing illumination in a 30' radius. The jelly uses its butter-colored glow to attract prey. It is currently divided, with one half on the ground between the pillar and wall and the other half hiding within a crack in the pillar. It attacks anyone who moves around the rock pillar. Within the crack is a *footman's mace +1* which is limned with *faerie fire* at all times. Anyone struck by the *mace* must make a successful saving throw vs. spell or also be covered in *faerie fire* for 2d6 rounds.

Mustard jelly: AC 4; MV 9 (18 if divided); HD 7+14; hp 54 (27 for each half); THAC0 13; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 5d4; SA split into two; SD +1 or better weapons to hit; MR 10%; SZ L; ML 14; Int average (8); AL N; XP 4,000; *MM*/276.

14. Piercer Colonies. These 20'-tall caves are homes for piercer colonies. The piercers cling to the ceiling and wait to drop on prey. Akwest often feeds on these subterranean mollusks. The piercers have no treasure.

Piercers (24/area): AC 3; MV 1; HD 1; hp 5 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SA surprise; SZ S; ML 10; Int non (0); AL N; XP 65; *MM*/290.

15. New Tunnels. Read the following when PCs first encounter a new tunnel:

> This tunnel appears different from the other tunnels you have seen. The walls are smoother, drier, and more regular, and the floor lacks stones or other debris.

These are new tunnels Akwest carved with his *disintegrate* eye. They are 10 to 12 feet high. Dwarves or PCs with the Stonemasonry NWP can determine that the tunnels are too recent to have been carved by water or lava, and there is no indication that tools were used.

16. Tunnel To the Chasm.

> On the ground in front of you is another arrow made of stones. It points toward a long tunnel that slopes down. A cool breeze issuing up from the far end brings with it a strange scent—the electric smell of ozone. For the briefest instant, you think you see a flicker of dim, opalescent light from farther down the tunnel.

The tunnel is 300 feet long with two bends, one left and one right. It slopes down at a 20-degree decline. If Akwest has not yet found the PCs, he is waiting just around the first bend, hovering in the middle of the corridor. If this is the party's first encounter with Akwest, read or paraphrase the following:

> Hovering in the middle of the corridor is the eye tyrant. Its eye stalks twitch and writhe atop its bulbous, armored form, and several of the eyes fix you with cold stares. The creature contorts its lips and jagged teeth into a hideous smile. The eye tyrant dips its body in greeting.

If the PCs do not instantly attack, Akwest speaks to them in Common. Read or paraphrase the following at this time:

> "You have finally arrived. I am sure you found my directions helpful. My name is Akwest Babasak. There is an urgent task you must complete for me."

See "Let's Make a Deal" below for details on encountering the beholder. The corridor continues sloping downward until it reaches area **17**, whereupon it opens up into a vast cavern. If PCs listen to Akwest and decide to accept his offer, he escorts them to the chasm and awaits their return, anxiously hovering in areas **15–17**.

Let's Make a Deal

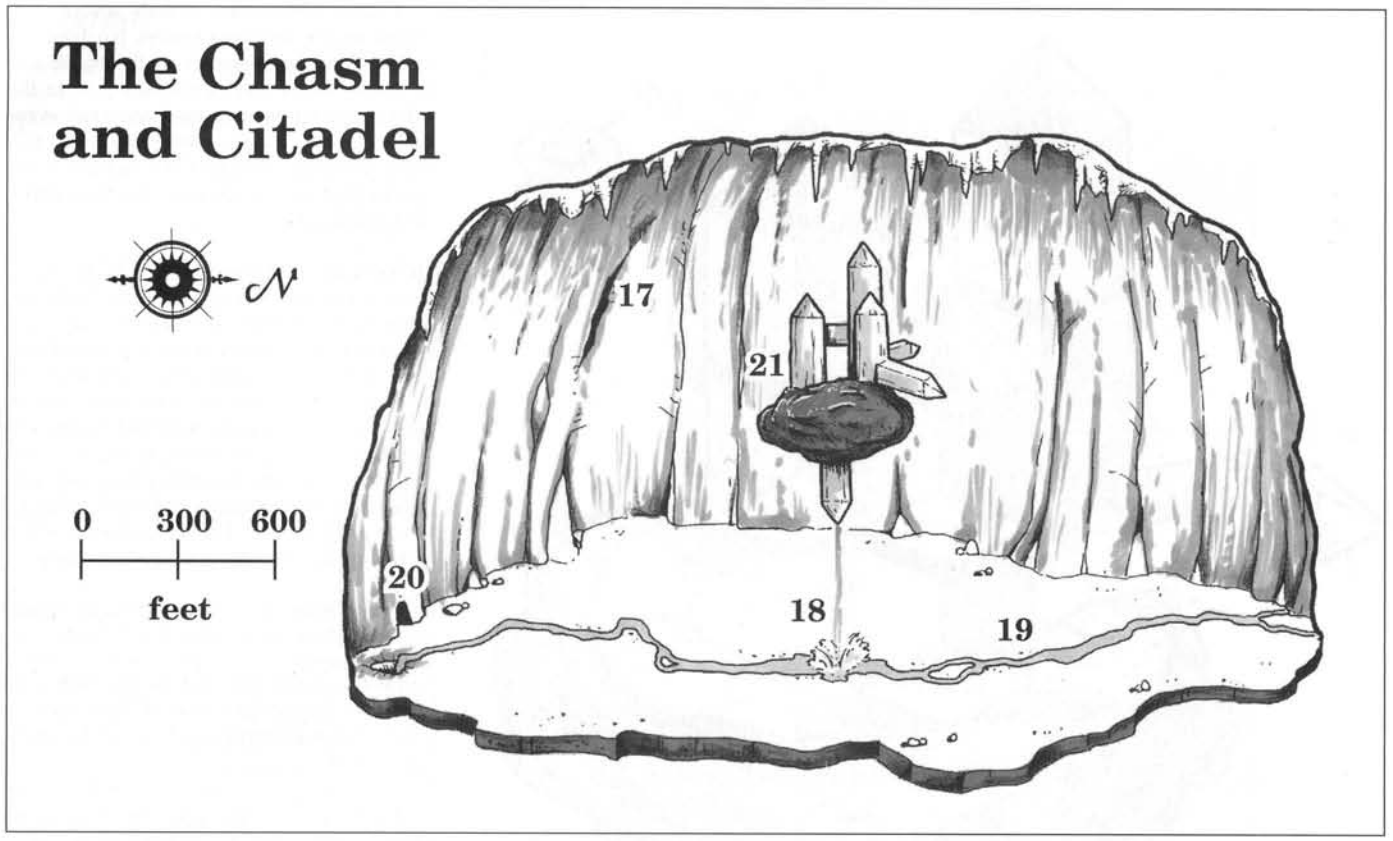
Wherever and whenever Akwest is encountered, he explains the situation and makes his deal with the PCs: In return for exploring the citadel and discovering who built it, Akwest vows never to harm Ammath again. The beholder is as good as his word. He further demands 50% of whatever the PCs find in the citadel, but he is willing to settle for 25%. He is arrogant and greedy but not stupid. The beholder refuses to deal away any of his own treasure (from area **11**), although he divulges the secret of the spring (area **6**) if PCs need some offer of goodwill.

If PCs choose to fight the beholder rather than talk, Akwest proves a fearsome foe. He rotates his spherical body so all ten of his small eye stalks can aim forward. He targets only two or three characters with his eyes, thus concentrating his firepower. Akwest's goal is to reduce the number of PCs as quickly as possible. If he has not yet imbibed his potion of *invisibility*, Akwest drops the potion to free up his *telekinesis* eye. Akwest knows every creature in the caverns, and if he gives a direct order to a monster, it is 75% likely to comply (with –3 penalty to its normal Morale score). Akwest's *charm monster* eye can also force the monster to obey.

Akwest Babasak (beholder): AC 0/2/7; MV fly 3 (B); HD 14; hp 69; THAC0 7; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4; SA magic; SD anti-magic ray; SZ M; ML 18; Int exceptional (16); AL LE; XP 14,000; *MM*/21.

The Chasm and Citadel

The citadel is home to Shannotsuul and her minions. They constructed it from a strange mineral that absorbs and enhances psionic power. By expending 50 PSPs of mental energy over 1 hour, Shannotsuul and her alhoon servants can reshape or reconfigure the crystal in a 10-foot radius around them. (This ability comes with years of practice; psionic PCs lack the mental focus to reshape the citadel except in extremely minor ways.) In the past, whenever Shannotsuul and the



alhoon needed more space, they literally grew new towers and chambers from the living crystal. Many of the interior and exterior surfaces are imprinted with psionic circuitry. Due to the active circuitry, the substance of the citadel continuously sheds a soft light in many pastel hues. The citadel is bright enough to illuminate the entire chasm. In the rocky core, infiltrates of crystal provide adequate illumination in most areas. All levels of the citadel are connected by crystal ramps instead of stairs. The ramps are covered in short, tough cilia that act as conveyer belts, moving PCs or objects placed on the ramp up or down at a movement rate of 3. The cilia allow the thralls to easily move large objects up or down levels. A walking PC can easily counter the cilia's movement if he or she wishes.

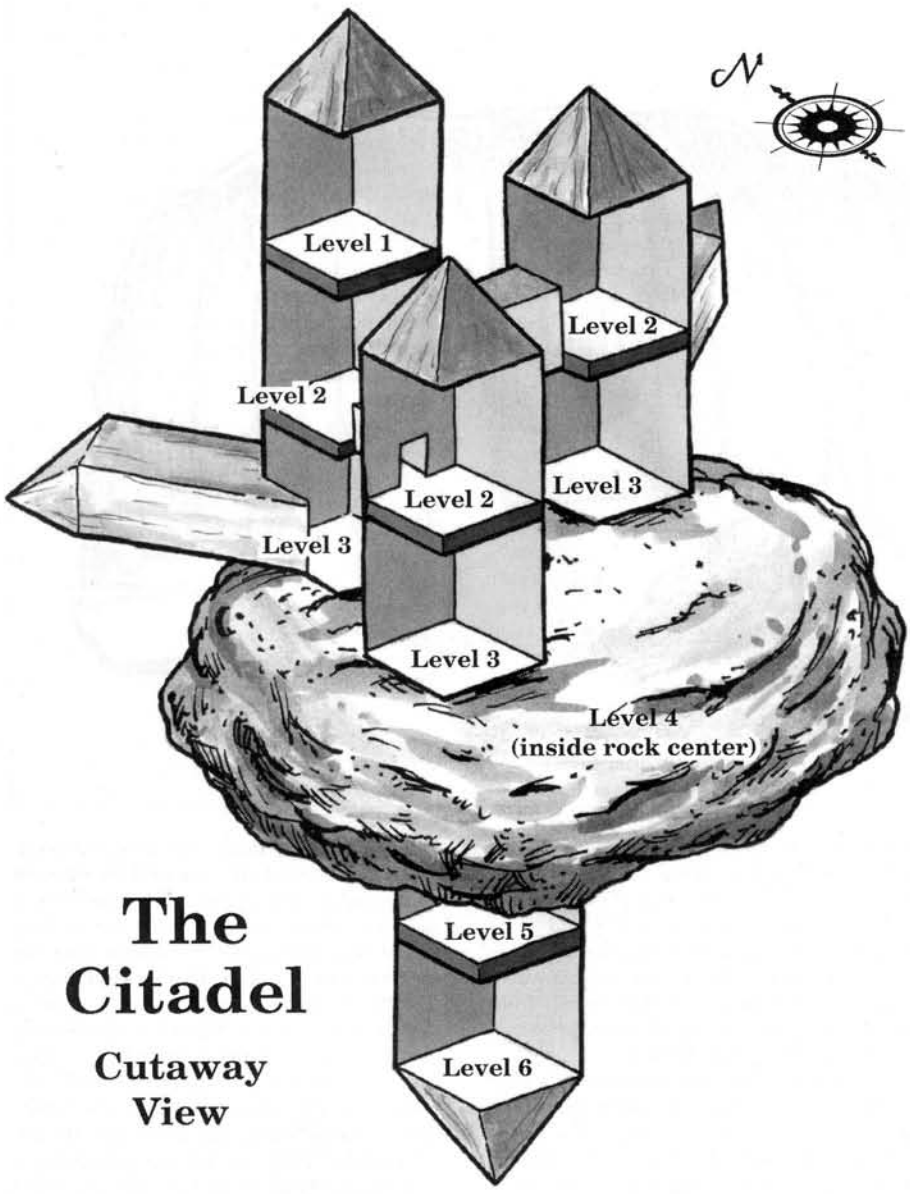
The citadel is surrounded by an *anti-magic shell* that negates all dweomers and psionics. It also prevents all forms of detection—magical and telepathic. The *shell* begins 10 feet away from the citadel and extends 50 feet in all directions. This area nullifies all magical and psionic power. No form of magical or psionic teleportation or *plane shifting* functions through the *shell* unless Shannotsuul deactivates it. Spells and psionics function normally inside the *anti-magic shell*, however, so *teleporting* from one section of the citadel to another section is possible. Spells or psionic disciplines already in effect before entering the *shell* are not *dispelled*; they simply do not function in the *shell* area. Any attempt to breech the *shell* using magic or psionics fails and alerts the alhoon and Shannotsuul that intruders are nearby. As long as the *shell* remains activated, spells that summon or contact beings from other planes (such as *conjure elemental* or *contact other plane*) do not function.

The mineral from which the citadel is built is extremely resilient and saves against all attacks on the Item Saving Throw table as the most favorable substance. Any spells that alter stone will affect the crystal, but alterations are temporary; the crystal fully restores itself within 3d4 rounds. Thus, a *disintegrate* spell can be used to create a 10'-diameter opening in a wall, but crystalline fibers begin forming over the orifice almost immediately, and within 3d4 rounds the wall is fully regrown. A *shatter* spell opens a 1' × 1' × 1' hole in a wall, but since all walls are at least 2 feet thick, multiple spells are needed before a breach can be made, and the hole still shuts in 3d4 rounds.

All doors in the citadel are made of an organic psi-aware substance. They appear as translucent membranes embedded into thick frames of interwoven vines or olive green tendrils. The doors and frames glisten with slime. Touching a door membrane causes it to open. *Hold portal* and *wizard lock*, however, are not effective on these doors. All doors automatically close 1 round after use or if the frame of an opened door is tapped twice. The irises of the doors open and close with a wet sucking sound. Shannotsuul and the alhoon have the ability to lock or unlock doors in their lines of sight by expending 2 PSPs per door. When a door is locked, the tendrils of the frame spread over the surface of the door to hold it shut. Locked doors do not open by touch and remain like this until unlocked. A *knock* spell opens a locked door. The doors (AC 10) can withstand 10 points of damage. Slashing and piercing weapons inflict full damage, while blunt weapons inflict no damage. The door can be torn open with a successful Bend Bars roll. The membrane still regrows after 3d4 rounds, however. The *soften* psionic ability can be used to weaken a door; after 2 rounds, the door can sustain only 1 point of damage.

Chasm Key

17. Tunnel and Chasm. Akwest's tunnel opens into a crack in the chasm wall about 700 feet above the floor. The tunnel is nearly impossible to see from the citadel. The immense cavern measures 1,200 feet wide by 3,000 feet long by 1,600 feet tall. The citadel hovers in the center of the rift, with 200–300 feet of clearance above and below.



The Citadel

Cutaway View

The tunnel opens into a great, subterranean expanse. At the center of this gigantic cavern floats a faintly glowing citadel of crystal and stone. Five multifaceted crystalline towers rise at odd angles from a central rock core. Bridges of similar material connect the towers to each other and to the rocky hub. Suspended from the base of the core is another mineral tower hanging downward. Each smooth facet glows in a pastel hue that changes as you watch.

The light shed by the citadel allows you to see the far wall of the cavern, the rows of giant stalactites hanging from the rough-hewn ceiling, and the natural stream of swiftly flowing water 700 feet below on the cavern floor. The stream stretches from one end of the cavern to the other and passes directly underneath the huge, floating crystal palace.

From the lowest point on the citadel, a thin trail of water falls to the stream below, sending off tendrils of mist that catch the light in beautiful patterns. A faint, somber wail echoes through the rift, then all is again quiet.

Further observation reveals several balconies set into the crystal towers. No detection spells or scrying can penetrate the citadel due to the *anti-magic shell* surrounding it. In the rift's ceiling are several small vents that eventually open onto the far side of Akwest's hill. Wind blowing through these natural vents creates faint, eerie wails that echo throughout the gigantic cavern.

18. Rift Floor and Cascade. A 50'-wide stream flows across the floor of the chasm. The water is ice cold and fresh. A steady trail of water pours from the bottom of the citadel and falls 300 feet into the stream. (The water seems to materialize on the surface of the lowest tower. See area **45** for details.) Scattered around the rift floor are bits of rock and crystal, old clothing, broken ceramic jars, bones both large and small, and other garbage and waste, some of which is quite old. Thralls dumping refuse from the citadel above produced this mess.

19. Dead Drow. This is the site of an encounter between a lone drow warrior and the alhoon:

> Near the stream you spot the skeleton of a humanoid wearing a suit of black chainmail. The skull has several holes and a large crack in it.

Over ninety years ago, the drow Sclek Di'Vad was separated from her scouting party during an encounter with a purple worm and stumbled into this cavern through the tunnel at area **20**. Here she was slain by the alhoon. Her adamantite alloy armor is *chainmail +3* sized to fit an elf. The armor slowly decays if taken from the underworld (as explained in *MM*/112–113).

20. Tunnels. The stream flows into a pit and rapidly falls into the depths of the Underdark. To the right of the stream is a tunnel entrance 20 feet wide and 30 feet tall. It proceeds 60 feet before branching into three smaller tunnels that lead into deeper regions of the Underdark.

21. Citadel. Even high-level PCs will have trouble reaching the citadel without the aid of magic or psionics. Akwest knows that the *anti-magic shell* begins about 60 feet from the citadel and fully encompasses the structure, but he doesn't know how "deep" the *shell* goes. PCs attempting to *teleport* to the citadel find their efforts thwarted.

Using *spider climb* spells or similar magic, the PCs can climb the ceiling and use ropes to lower themselves onto one of the citadel's balconies. If the PCs lack sufficient rope, they can simply drop from the ceiling and cast *feather fall* (or activate some other magical item) at the moment before impact, thus negating damage from the fall.

22. Gate Facet.

> An 8'-tall, flat facet dominates one wall of this room. The smooth plane of crystal displays an image of the cavern floor.

The facet is embedded with psionic circuitry and serves as a *gate* providing two-way transport to and from the cavern floor. The *gate* functions only when the *anti-magic shell* surrounding the citadel is opened by Shannotsuul, however. Once the *anti-magic shell* is deactivated, the *gate* opens on the cavern floor directly below the citadel, appearing as a silvery disk 6 feet in diameter.

23. Balconies. All balconies are made of the same mineral as the towers. Magic and psionics function normally on the balconies, each of which has a 3'-high crystal ledge.

24. Crystal Grinding Room. The sound of grinding and grating stone can be heard as PCs approach this room.

> Over a dozen humanoids labor here, cutting, grinding, and polishing crystals. Nine of them stand 3 feet tall and have sickly white skin and large, opalescent eyes. Three larger specimens stand head and shoulders above the others and appear to have six arms each. These 6'-tall hulks work on a large torus composed of the same substance as the citadel. You also notice two purple-skinned figures in tattered robes huddled over a workbench.

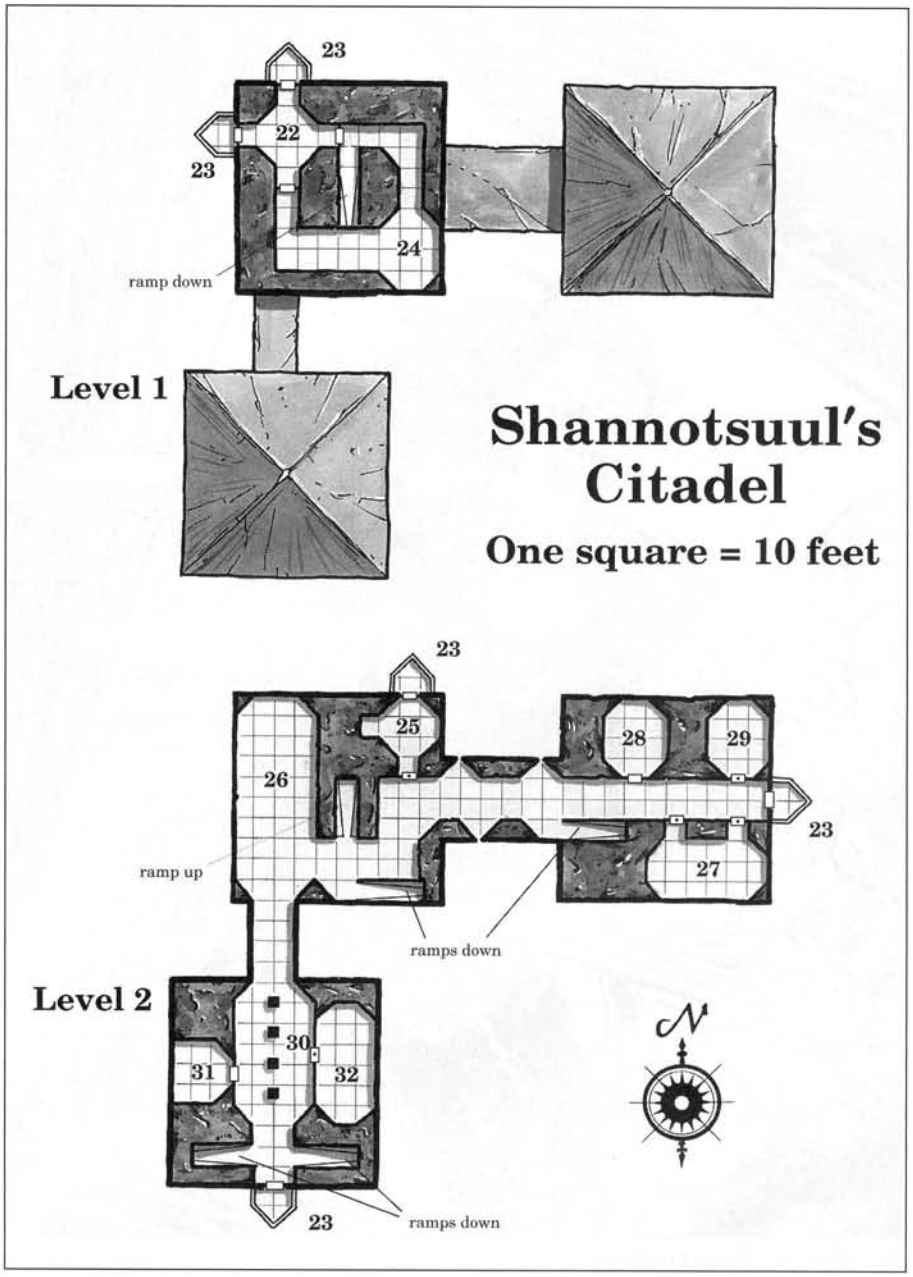
Nine derro thralls, three mutant derro, and two illithid zombies labor here, producing crystal artifacts that Shannotsuul intends to enchant or imprint with psionic circuitry. The derro mutants are twice as large as regular derro and have six arms each.

The derro thralls and mutants attack any non-illithid who attempts to cross the chamber, but the illithid zombies do not attack unless they are stopped from completing their tasks. If combat goes against the thralls, they attempt to flee and alert the alhoon in area **35**.

Scattered throughout the workroom are 27 cut gemstones worth 700 gp, 100 gp (×3), 25 gp (×7), and 10 gp (×16) respectively. The 10'-diameter crystal torus is covered in geometric carvings and would be worth 10,000 gp to a sage or wizard, but it weighs several tons.

Derro (9): AC 8; MV 9; HD 3; hp 12 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (1d4+1 with small pick); MR 30%; SZ S; ML 12; Int very (11); AL CE; XP 175; *MM*/96.

Derro mutants (3): AC 6; MV 12; HD 6; hp 26, 23, 20; THAC0 15; #AT 4; Dmg 1d6+1 (×4); MR 30%; SZ M (6' tall); ML 12; Int very (12); AL CE; XP 175; *MM*/96 (variant). Each derro mutant wields four footman's picks.



Illithid zombies (2): AC 6; MV 9; HD 6; hp 29, 24; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 4d4; SD immune to *sleep, charm, hold,* and cold-based spells; impervious to poison, paralysis, and death magic; SZ M; ML special; Int non (0); AL N; XP 420; *MM*/373 (zombie, variant).

25. Guest Room. The south door is locked, but the north door (leading to the balcony) is not.

Two githyanki inhabit this room. They first encountered Shannotsuul during a raid on an illithid lair and were amazed to find the ulitharid fighting against the mind flayers. Despite Shannotsuul's hatred of normal illithids, the githyanki still view her as a potential enemy and distrust her motives. When Shannotsuul made an offer of alliance against normal illithids, the githyanki sent Airada and Emani to pose as emissaries while actually scouting her lair for a future assault. They have been here a few days and are almost ready to leave.

When the PCs approach either door, they see movement behind the translucent portal as Airada approaches. She calls out to the PCs in her native language, which sounds like a rabid dog barking. PCs with the ability to understand her (via *comprehend languages* or

The githyanki Airada taunts her foe.

similar means) hear Airada asking them their names and their business. She simultaneously uses *ESP* to probe the surface thoughts of anyone near the door. As long as no overtly hostile thoughts are detected, she unlocks and opens the door.

> The door dissolves into the surrounding wall. Standing in the entrance is a tall, emaciated female humanoid with pale yellow skin and dark hair braided into elaborate knots mixed with beads of precious stones. She is clothed in a long silk wrap decorated with feathers and silver thread.

> She appraises you and smiles, revealing pointed teeth. In halting Common, she says, "Enter, strangers. I am Airada. I must speak with you."

Airada is amazed to see surface-dwelling folk here in Shannotsuul's lair but conceals her surprise from PCs. If pressed, she explains that she and Emani are here to investigate an outcast illithid who inhabits this citadel. The githyanki know much about the citadel but divulge only enough information to get the PCs into trouble, telling them about a human captive in the core of the citadel (area **43**). Airada knows about the urophion at area **30** and purposely directs PCs down that hallway if she can. Emani sits on a large couch polishing a *two-handed sword +2* and has portions of her gilded plate armor sitting on the floor nearby. (She is currently AC 6.) The entire left side of her body is tattooed in complex "endless knot" designs.

Airada and Emani hesitate to fight numerically superior foes. If combat ensues, they quickly *teleport* to area **35** and raise an alarm. If the citadel becomes too dangerous a place for the githyanki, Airada casts *feather fall* on herself and Emani, then jumps from the rocky core. They *plane shift* once they safely land on the rift floor. (The *feather fall* spell becomes inoperative only while they are falling through the *anti-magic shell*, reactivating once the *shell* is penetrated.) One week after Airada and Emani escape, the citadel is raided by a githyanki war party.

The room contains two large beds, several couches and chairs, a long table, and a wardrobe. In one corner, concealed by a curtain, is a covered chamber pot and a metal bathing tub. Atop the table are some food scraps and a 1' × 1' slab of psi-active crystal that heats up when touched and serves as a small stove.

Hidden in the wardrobe behind several silk wraps is a *scroll of protection from fire* in a leather scroll tube trapped with a *fire trap* spell (1d4+7 points of damage). Airada's spellbook is under her bed and has Type M contact poison on the first two pages. It contains all of the spells she has memorized plus *affect normal fires, fly, knock, levitate, monster summoning I, protection from normal missiles, pyrotechnics, unseen servant, wall of ice,* and *wizard eye.*

Airada Anaz, githyanki female W7: AC 8; MV 12; hp 29; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SA psionics, spells; SZ M; ML 14; Int genius (18); AL LE; XP 2,000; *MM*/153.

Spells (4/3/2/1): 1st—*feather fall* (×2), *magic missile, shocking grasp*; 2nd—*invisibility, flaming sphere, web*; 3rd—*lightning bolt, hold person*; 4th—*polymorph other.*

Airada carries a dagger and a scroll with the spells *power word stun* and *cone of cold* (cast at 14th level). She also wears twelve golden bangles worth 20 gp each.

Psionics Summary: #AT 1; MTHAC0 14; MAC 9; Lv 7; PSPs 210; Psionic Attacks—All; Psionic Defenses—All; Psionic Disciplines—*body equilibrium, probability travel, teleport, ESP.*

Emani Rial, githyanki female F7: AC –1; MV 12; hp 75; THAC0 13; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type (+3 bonus for 18/22 Strength); SA psionics; SZ M; ML 14; Int exceptional (16); AL LE; XP 2,000; *MM*/153.

Emani wears *platemail +1* and wields a *two-handed sword +2* in combat. She carries two daggers treated with Type E poison (good for

one successful attack). She wears a *ring of protection* +3 with a curse that activates if worn by anyone of good alignment, imposing a –3 penalty to Armor Class and saving throws instead of a +3 bonus. Removing the cursed *ring* requires a *remove curse* spell. Her baroque armor is worth 5,000 gp intact.

Psionics Summary: #AT 1; MTHAC0 14; MAC 9; Lv 7; PSPs 210; Psionic Attacks—All; Psionic Defenses—All; Psionic Disciplines—*body equilibrium, probability travel, teleport, ESP.*

26. Bonethriven Music Hall.

> A low dais bathed in light dominates the center of this otherwise darkened room. A crystal stool rests atop the dais. On one side of the stool stands a rack holding several musical instruments, including a lute and several drums. On the other side rests a strange device resembling large, freestanding bagpipes. Several tubes of carved bone protrude from a central bellows. The bone tubes possess many holes and buttons. Hanging from the ceiling over the dais is a slimy membrane crisscrossed with pulsing blue veins.

This room is where Shannotsuul practices music. (Both Shannon Canteel and Redatsuul were musicians.) The membrane on the ceiling acts as an amplifier, magnifying any sound produced on the dais and causing it to echo loudly through the entire level. It loses its powers when detached from the ceiling.

PCs playing the instruments alert the githyanki in area **25**, who come to investigate in 3 rounds. The bagpipe-like instrument by the stool is a bonethriven, an illithid instrument that requires both hands and tentacles to play properly. Any non-illithid blowing into the mouthpiece or disturbing the bellows illicits a loud wail and nothing more.

27. Scrying Chamber. The doors to this room are locked.

Three crystal chairs are set into the middle of the floor. Each chair faces a smooth, glowing facet on the south wall. Anyone sitting in a chair activates the facet, which behaves like a *crystal ball*. Each facet can be used up to six times daily.

Shannotsuul uses this room to spy on illithid communities. Using a scrying facet psychically alerts the ulitharid and the alhoon.

28. Practice Room.

> Dozens of slim crystal shafts protrude from the walls at all angles. A few of them appear chipped in places. Bits of shattered armor litter the floor. Near the door is a pile of damp leathery ropes from which protrude gruesome blades.

Fourteen tentacle extensions (see *The Illithiad*) are piled near the door. Shannotsuul and the alhoon use these 3'-long cables topped with sharp blades during combat simulations. The tentacle extensions give them a +2 bonus to attack rolls with tentacles and inflict 1d4+4 points of damage each. Five PSPs must be expended every turn they are worn. The extensions do not prohibit the extraction of victims' brains. If time allows, the alhoon come here and don the extensions before dealing with intruders.

29. Alhoon Apothecary. This door is locked. If opened, read or paraphrase the following:

> Three long crystal tables occupy the center of the room. One is covered with dried fungus and roots. Another is cluttered with dozens of bottles, flasks, and vials. The last is stacked high with alchemical equipment: retorts, alembics, lengths of twisted metal, and glass tubes. A ceramic bowl of thick murky liquid slowly begins to bubble on this last tabletop.

This apothecary and alchemical workshop is used by the alhoon. Many mundane medicinal herbs and preparations can be found in the bottles and flasks. Mixed in among the herbal medicines are several potion ingredients, including a bottle of fresh troll's blood worth 150 gp. A PC with the Herbalism NWP who studies the ingredients and makes a proficiency check notices that many of the preparations are sedative in nature. Four bottles on the middle table contain a thin purple broth that makes the imbiber immune to the psionic-draining effects of the lichen in area **34**. Another item of interest is a stoppered bottle of green gel which, when rubbed on the head, reduces a psionic victim's PSPs to zero for 6 hours. The bottle contains five doses. The alchemical glassware is worth 2,500 gp for the set but is bulky and fragile.

The murky bubbling liquid is a concentrated form of psi-active mucous that coats the skin of all healthy illithids. Shannotsuul and the alhoon use it to enhance their psionic powers. The substance is telepathically aware and begins to bubble whenever sentient beings approach within 40 feet. Smearing it on oneself gives a psionic PC an extra 25 PSPs for 24 hours or gives a nonpsionic character 25 PSPs and the ability to exercise one random psionic discipline for 24 hours. During this time, the character functions as a psionic wild talent. Strong wine or any other acidic solution washes off the mucous.

30. Urophion Pillar. A row of rough crystal pillars runs down the center of this wide hallway. A pale and translucent urophion (a roper implanted with an illithid tadpole) stands motionless against the northernmost pillar, appearing as part of the pillar. It was placed here to keep the githyanki from wandering too far from their room. It acts as a guardian and attacks any non-resident of the citadel. It uses its psionic *domination* attack first. If this fails, it uses its *mind blast* then lashes out with its tentacles. If bypassed or reduced to half its hit points, it telepathically alerts the alhoon in area **35** of intruders. It has no treasure.

Urophion: AC 0; MV 3; HD 12; hp 63; THAC0 9; #AT 6; Dmg 1d4+2 (×6); SA tendrils, psionics; SZ L; ML 20; Int genius (17); AL LE; XP 9,000; *The Illithiad*.

Psionics Summary: #AT 1; MTHAC0 11; MAC 5; Lv 9; PSPs 146; Psionic Attacks—EW, II, MB; Psionic Defenses—All; Psionic Disciplines—*control body, body equilibrium, levitation, awe, ESP, domination, post hypnotic suggestion*, taste link**.

* See *The Illithiad* for details on these new disciplines, replace with others, or ignore them.

31. Touch Sculptures. This chamber contains a dozen sculptures made of strange crystalline composites. Each sculpture hovers in the air due to permanent psionic *levitation*. The *levitation* effect is lost if the items are removed from the room.

Shannotsuul collected the sculptures over the years and kept them because they have interesting or unique textures. On the walls of the room are bas-relief carvings that depict an illithid caressing the sculptures with its tentacles. Series of horizontal lines broken by gaps are carved next to each bas-relief. The lines are Qualith, the illithid written language, and describe the best texture features of each sculpture in the room.

Three sculptures are unusual and are psionically-powered. One is a smooth marble sphere that transforms into a cube when touched, another is a set of intertwined colored glass rods that continually weave together in complex patterns, and the last is a stone icosahedron that changes texture every round. The unusual sculptures have been taken from illithid lairs and were used to teach immature illithids how to effectively use their tentacles. Each of these sculptures is worth 2,000 gp to an interested buyer; the remaining nine sculptures are unremarkable and worth only 100 gp apiece.

32. Locked Cell. The door to this room is locked. A one-way psionic bubble surrounding this room allows psionic *teleportation* in but prevents similar disciplines from permitting escape. Magical *teleportation* is unaffected by the bubble.

Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs enter the cell:

The product of alhoon experiments, a quaggoth mutant rises from its rejuvenation pod.

You are confronted by darkness. As your eyes adjust to the gloom, you see an unmoving body clothed in elegant robes propped in the corner of this room. Its head is slumped forward, and four long tentacles trail from around its mouth to fan out over its torso. Clinging to the walls is a dried-out lichen or fungus, and next to the body is an empty glass vial.

The body is that of a mind flayer who encountered the alhoon in the Underdark. Gazag and Llommoll bested the illithid in psionic combat and brought it back to test their psi-draining lichen from area **34**. The lichen proved fatal to the illithid after two weeks of continuous exposure. The body is several months old but has been rubbed with a preservative solution to prevent decay. The dried purple lichen on the walls is dead.

33. Thrall Quarters.

Several fur-covered humanoids stand at the far end of the room with their backs to you. They are taking turns throwing crudely made stone daggers at a shield hanging on the wall. One dagger clangs off of the metal shield and elicits loud, guttural laughter from them. Attached to the north wall are nine large brown pods that pulse in perfect synchronicity.

The alhoon allow their most trusted thralls to live here in relative comfort. The quaggoth thralls are playing with their weapons and are automatically surprised by PCs. They have been altered by the alhoon and possess second faces on their torsos. The faces appear as twisted quaggoth visages with large teeth and glaring, bloodshot eyes. In combat, if the mutants hit with a claw attack, the second face receives an attack roll to bite the victim. The thralls attack non-illithids on sight and alert the alhoon in area **35** with their battle cries.

The pods along the wall serve as beds for the thralls, and they open when touched. The interior of each pod is warm and covered with a thick layer of fluffy green moss. Anyone climbing inside must make a successful saving throw vs. spell with a +3 bonus or be lulled to sleep by the soothing psionic vibrations emanating from the pods. If left undisturbed, the person sleeps for 1d4 turns and awakens completely refreshed (as if they slept a full 8 hours).

One quaggoth thrall has a shiny rock collection inside his pod, and another has a chess set with half of the pieces missing. In the last pod is a sack containing their massed treasure: 36 sp, 8 gp, and 112 pieces of smoked quartz and rock crystal worth 1 gp each.

A ceramic jug full of fresh water and several pouches of dried subterranean insects rest on a table in the center of the room. A chamber pot badly in need of emptying rests in a corner. A scroll tube filled with dried hallucinogenic fungus is concealed behind the shield hanging on the wall. Eating it leads to intoxication, whereupon the imbiber is unable to move or act for 1d6 turns unless he or she makes a successful saving throw vs. poison at a –4 penalty.

Quaggoth mutants (8): AC 6; MV 12; HD 2+2; hp 18 each; THAC0 19; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1d4/1d4 or by weapon; SA berserk rage, second face bites for 1d6 points of damage; SD immune to poison; SZ L; ML 18; Int low (6); AL N; XP 175; *MM*/298 (quaggoth, variant).

34. Isolation Room. This room is completely dark, and the walls are covered with purple lichen, a parasitic fungus developed by the ulitharid as a weapon to infect and destroy elder brains. The lichen acts as a psychic sink, draining psionic points at the rate of 3d10 PSPs per round from any psionic creature within 10 feet. Every 10 points it drains causes it to grow 1 square foot. The lichen is susceptible to light and is rendered dormant when exposed to *light* or *continual light* spells. It dies if exposed to daylight for 1 round. It must be fed at least 1 PSP every day, or it dies. It is immune to weapon attacks but is affected normally by spells.

Purple lichen: AC 10; MV 0; HD 4; hp 30; THAC0 nil; #AT 0; Dmg 0; SA drain PSPs; SD immune to weapons; SW vulnerable to light; SZ L; ML 0; Int non (0); AL N; XP 270; New monster.

35. Alhoon Laboratory. The alhoon Gazag and Llommoll spend most of their time here. They might be alerted to the party's presence due to noise from combat, a psionic alarm, or from thralls who have spotted PCs elsewhere. If the alhoon cannot determine the PCs' location, they use the scrying facets in area **27**, in which case they have a cumulative 5% chance per round of locating the PCs. If the PCs are found, the alhoon cast *protection from normal missiles*, *fire shield*, and *Bigby's interposing hand*, don the tentacle extensions in area **28**, and *teleport* to the PCs' location with demands to put down their arms. PCs who agree are led to area **49**.

If intruders are detected and located outside the citadel, the alhoon prepare for combat but do not leave the citadel. If intruders are not located, the alhoon patrol the citadel for 2 hours before returning to this chamber.

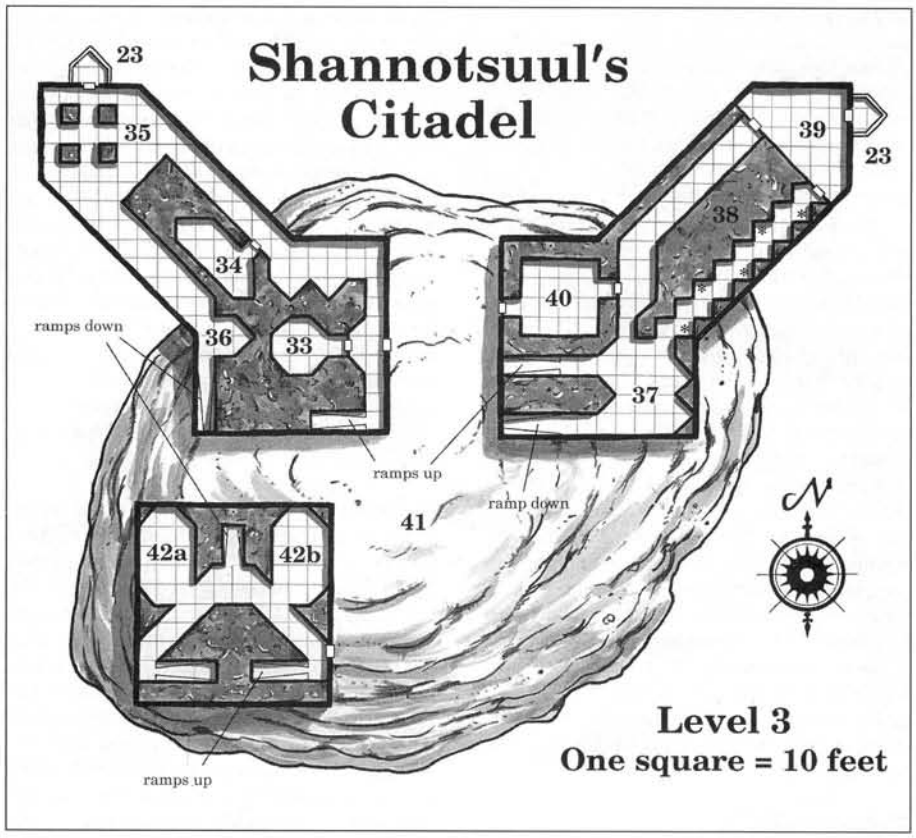
If not previously alerted to the PCs' presence, the alhoon are here working. Read or paraphrase the following if PCs encounter the alhoon here:

> Two hooded figures work at a table against the northeast wall. They look toward you, revealing eyes enclosed in dark goggles and mouths lined with writhing tentacles. A resonating voice speaks in your head. "Step forward, strangers. Put down your weapons immediately and you might avoid peril to life and limb. Resist us and we shall have your heads within feeding stocks by the hour's end."

"Feeding stocks" are restraints in which a victim's head and wrists are secured before an illithid feeds. Before the PCs arrived, the alhoon were working on a staff laying on the table. The staff is 6 feet tall and carved from the same crystal as the citadel. It acts as a psionic reflector and causes any psionic attack or discipline aimed at the holder to rebound on the attacker. This happens automatically and does not count as an action for the staff wielder. Each rebound uses 1 charge, and the staff currently has 6 charges. Llommoll uses the staff if combat begins.

The alhoon are loyal to Shannotsuul. Despite their evil tendencies, they follow Shannotsuul's commands, demanding the surrender of all surface dwellers before attacking. If PCs refuse to surrender, Llommoll attacks with a *mind blast* as Gazag casts *chaos*. *Hold person* and *slow* spells follow. Gazag also uses his *ring of the ram* on enemy spellcasters. If either alhoon is reduced to half hit points, Gazag casts a *fireball*, and the two *teleport* to area **44** to enlist the intellect devourers in their fight against the PCs.

The room holds several items used by the alhoon in their magical and psionic research. Two *levitating* metal trays are covered with surgical tools, including a cephalometer (a psionic device that looks like a set of calipers). The cephalometer measures the head size of a victim and provides information about the person's brain and psionic ability, if any. Next to the trays is an operating table stained with blood. A wall rack holds a set of two helmets made of a warm, rubbery, fleshlike material connected by thick wires that allow two psionic individuals to transfer PSPs from one to the other, the transfer taking only 1 round. Coils of wire and several more nonfunctioning helmets are scattered over a nearby workbench. Extra sets of glaregoggles can be found on every table in the room. In an open metal box are the broken remains of three other crystal staves identical to the one the alhoon are currently preparing. The broken staves are nonfunctional.



Shelves set into the pillars contain 5'-tall crystal vats. Suspended in a preservative solution are the remains of some of the alhoon's less successful experiments in thrall anatomy. One vat holds a dead derro thrall with fang-filled mouths all over its body, and another holds a quaggoth head covered with dozens of extra eyes. The DM should feel free to add more grotesque samples of the alhoon's dark handiwork.

Behind a secret panel in one wall are the alhoon's spellbooks. The books contain the following spells: 1st—*audible glamer, cantrip, color spray, enlarge, grease, jump, magic missile, shocking grasp, light, mending, read magic, shield, wizard mark*; 2nd—*alter self, blur, deafness, detect invisibility, ray of enfeeblement, web, darkness 15' radius, flaming sphere, forget, invisibility, locate object, magic mouth*; 3rd—*dispel magic, fireball, hold person, protection from normal missiles, slow, spectral force, hold undead, item, lightning bolt, non-detection, wraithform*; 4th—*animate dead, fire shield, ice storm, polymorph other, solid fog, fire trap, fumble, illusionary wall, improved invisibility, magic mirror*; 5th—*Bigby's interposing hand, chaos, conjure elemental, dream, fabricate, hold monster, seeming, stone shape, wall of iron.*

Gazag and **Llommoll** (alhoon): AC Gazag 5, Llommoll 3; MV 12; HD 8+4; hp 49, 46; THAC0 11; #AT 4; Dmg 1d4 (×4); SA spells, psionics; SD spell immunities; MR 90%; SZ M; ML 18; Int genius (17); AL LE; XP 9,000; *MC1* (alhoon) or *The Illithiad*. Gazag wears a *ring of the ram* with 8 charges. Llommoll wears a purple and red *cloak of displacement*. Both alhoon wear glaregoggles to see within the citadel. They adorn themselves with costume jewelry (worth 1d4 × 10 gp each).

Gazag's spells (4/3/3/2/1): 1st—*audible glamer, color spray, magic missile, shocking grasp*; 2nd—*alter self, detect invisibility, web*; 3rd—*fireball, hold person, protection from normal missiles*; 4th—*ice storm, polymorph other*; 5th—*chaos*.

Llommoll's spells (4/3/3/2/1): 1st—*cantrip, enlarge, jump, grease*; 2nd—*blur, deafness, ray of enfeeblement*; 3rd—*dispel magic, slow, spectral force*; 4th—*fire shield, solid fog*; 5th—*Bigby's interposing hand*.

Psionics Summary: #AT 1; MTHAC0 10; MAC 5; Lv 10; PSPs 320 each; Psionic Attacks—EW, II, MB; Psionic Defenses—All; Psionic Disciplines—*control body, levitation, body equilibrium, probability travel, teleport, astral projection, domination, awe, ESP, post-hypnotic suggestion*, taste link**.

* See *The Illithiad* for details on these new disciplines, replace with others, or ignore them.

36. Derro Monstrosity.

> A massive conglomeration of grey flesh is heaped in the center of this alcove. The flabby mass is covered with derro faces and heads. Suddenly, all of their eyes open and turn to look in your direction!

The monstrosity is a mass of derro tissue and neural matter grafted together by the alhoon. The thing acts as a guard, dozing until somebody walks past. Its many ears and eyes allow it to detect *invisible* PCs easily. The monstrosity attacks intruders with its many mouths. It is branded with a psionic seal that allows it to reflect the first three spells cast directly at it. Area of effect spells are not reflected, and spells are always reflected straight back at the caster. The monstrosity shrieks and babbles when it attacks, alerting the alhoon to the presence of intruders. Additionally, its babbling causes *confusion* to opponents within 10 feet unless they make a successful saving throw vs. paralyzation with a +2 bonus. It has no treasure.

Derro monstrosity: AC 4; MV 6; HD 8; hp 43; THAC0 11; #AT 2; Dmg 2d4/2d4; SA *confusion*; SD spell reflection; MR 30%; SZ M (6' diameter); ML 20; Int low (5); AL LE; XP 3,000; New monster.

37. Braintree.

> A repulsive, slime-covered, greyish-pink tree trunk stretches from the floor to the ceiling. Several limbs branch off from the main trunk, each ending in convoluted masses of dripping tissue that look similar to large brains.

This weird plant-animal hybrid produces nourishment for the neothelids in area **40**. The braintree has no effective melee attack but is psionically aware and defends itself if attacked. Each of the seven brains hanging from the tree can attack psionically, but each draws PSPs from a common pool.

The brains hang on fleshy stalks, and severing a brain from its stalk or attacking a brain directly requires a successful called shot (–4 penalty to hit). The brains and their stalks have AC 8 and can withstand 6 points of damage. This damage does not count against the creature's main hit point total. The braintree has no treasure.

Braintree: AC 8; MV 0; HD 12; hp 65; THAC0 nil; #AT 6; Dmg nil; SA/SD psionics; MR 45%; SZ L; ML 20; Int average (9); AL N; XP 2,000; New monster.

Psionics Summary: #AT 7; MTHAC0 10; MAC 5; Lv 6; PSPs 450; Psionic Attacks—EW, II, MB; Psionic Defenses—All; Psionic Disciplines—*control body, body equilibrium, domination, awe, ESP*.

38. Resonance Stone Gallery. These hallways are dimly lit. The southernmost hall is lined with triangular niches. Five of these niches (indicated on the map with asterisks) contain a single polished stone embedded in one wall and lit by a thin beam of light. The stones are psionic resonance stones that each radiate one particular type of emotion, which can be felt by anyone within 10 feet. From west to east, the stones radiate the following emotions: happiness (blue stone), pride (green stone), regret (red stone), sadness (violet stone), and terror (black stone). Anyone approaching within 10 feet of the black stone must make a successful saving throw vs. spell or flee in terror for 2d6 rounds. Stones can be pried out of the wall but have a 50% chance of shattering. The stones are worth 200 gp each.

39. Trophy Room. The floor, walls, and ceiling of this room are covered in a living tissue from which spring scores of small, multi-jointed limbs ending in short, clawed hands. Most of the small hands hold grisly trophies from Shannotsuul's encounters with illithids over the years. The hands let go of an item if it is pulled and carefully grasp anything placed in their grip. Dozens of shriveled illithid heads hang from these tiny claws on the walls.

Chipped or shattered weapons and armor are carefully held by arms growing from the floor, and chests and boxes held aloft by the claws are overflowing with items that defy description. Almost any mundane item can be found here, although there's a 50% chance that the item is damaged. Buried under some illithid robes is a silver feeding stock worth 250 gp. Nobody except a mind flayer would buy such an item if they knew what it was.

The claws hold a collection of illithid sketches of subterranean landscapes rendered in infrared ink (appearing as blank paper to normal vision), a box of electrum toothpicks worth 10 gp, a silver tentacle comb worth 30 gp, an intact head-shaving kit, and several sets of glaregoggles, one of which is fitted with nonmagical magnifying optics that allow the wearer to see ten times better at distances of 2 feet or less. Wearing the magnifying glare-goggles for more than 1 turn causes a mild headache, but they are worth 100 gp.

40. Neothelid Chamber. The doors to this room are four times thicker than others in the citadel and are twice as large. They can be opened from outside the room but not from inside. Read or paraphrase the following if either door is opened:

> Three large, slime-covered worms burst out of the opened door and lunge toward you! Tentacles surrounding each worm's mouth reach out and snap in the air as the creature advances.

This room houses three neothelids. They attack first with their breath weapons (see below). The chamber is unlit and slick with moisture. Aside from the hungry inhabitants, there is nothing of value here.

Neothelids appear as large, slimy worms with four tentacles surrounding their circular mouths. Created from illithid tadpoles, these particular specimens are not fully grown but are formidable adversaries nonetheless. Their hides are coated with poisonous slime that causes 1d10 points of damage if touched with bare skin. Their breath weapon is a spray of enzymes 3 feet wide at its origin, 30 feet long, and 10 feet wide at its extreme end. The enzymes dissolve most organic matter but not brain tissue. This attack form can be used once per day by these immature neothelids and causes 3d12 points of damage; a successful saving throw vs. breath weapon reduces the damage by half.

Immature neothelids (3): AC 0; MV 9; HD 8; hp 47, 41, 36; THAC0 13; #AT 1 (bite) or 4 (tentacles); Dmg 2d8 or 1d6+1 (×4); SA breath weapon, psionics; SZ L (20' long); ML 20; Int genius; AL LE; XP 7,000; *The Illithiad* (neothelid, variant).

Psionics Summary: #AT 1; MTHAC0 13; MAC 7; Lv 5; PSPs 100 each; Psionic Attacks—EW, II, MB; Psionic Defenses—All; Psionic Disciplines—*control body, body equilibrium, awe, ESP*.

41. Rocky Core. The crystal citadel is built upon a large granite and mineral core. The rock surface is rough and has many cracks and crevices. Portions are covered in red and purple lichen. Every turn PCs spend on the surface of the core, there is a 20% chance that 2d4 mongrelman thralls emerge from area **42** to dump garbage.

The exterior surfaces of the crystal towers are smooth single facets that glow softly and change color slowly. The surfaces show little wear and few irregularities but can be climbed by thieves at a –20% penalty to their Climb Walls checks. The walls resist the hammering of spikes or pitons.

Living in the crevices of the rock are several thralls horribly mutated by the alhoon. They act as guards and watchmen for the citadel. The mongrelmen bring out food and water to these poor creatures, but the mutants attack anyone else in sight with their bare claws and teeth. One mutant appears as a quaggoth from the torso down but has no arms and several derro heads protruding from its chest and back. Another appears as grossly bloated quaggoth head from whose neck spring seven long muscular arms. If two or more arms hit, the bite attack is made at +3 to hit. Several grimlock thralls have had derro heads and torsos grafted onto their backs. Each possesses a psionic seal that allows it to

A horde of mutant thralls have turned a dead hydra into their home.

blink as per a blink dog. The mutants use this ability to stalk prey on the rocky surface, *blinking* from crevice to crevice before they attack. One deep crack in the surface holds their meager treasure: six gems worth 10 gp each, a rusted dagger, and some mossy bedding.

Multi-headed quaggoth: AC 6; MV 9; HD 5; hp 24; THAC0 15; #AT 8 (bites); Dmg 1d3 (×8); MR 30%; SA *blink*; SD sees in all directions (cannot be surprised); SZ L; ML 18; Int low (6); AL LE; XP 420; *MM*/298 (variant).

Quaggoth head with arms: AC 5; MV 15; HD 4; hp 18; THAC0 15; #AT 5; Dmg 1d4 (×4)/1d8; SA *blink*; SZ M; ML 18; Int low (6); AL LE; XP 420; *MM*/298 (variant).

Grimlock-derro conjoins (5): AC 5; MV 9; HD 4; hp 24 each; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1d6/1d6; MR 30%; SA *blink*; SD *detect invisible* at will; SZ M; ML 18; Int low (5); AL LE; XP 420; New monster.

42. Thrall Chambers. Area **42a** houses derro thralls, while area **42b** houses mongrelmen. Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs enter area **42a**:

> A group of short, white-haired dwarves are eating from three pots set over glowing crystal slabs. Several more sleep in pockets carved into the dried-out carcass of a hydra. From the eyes of the hydra carcass sprout long tentacles topped with rounded suckers. Several of these tentacles are attached to the sleeping derro.

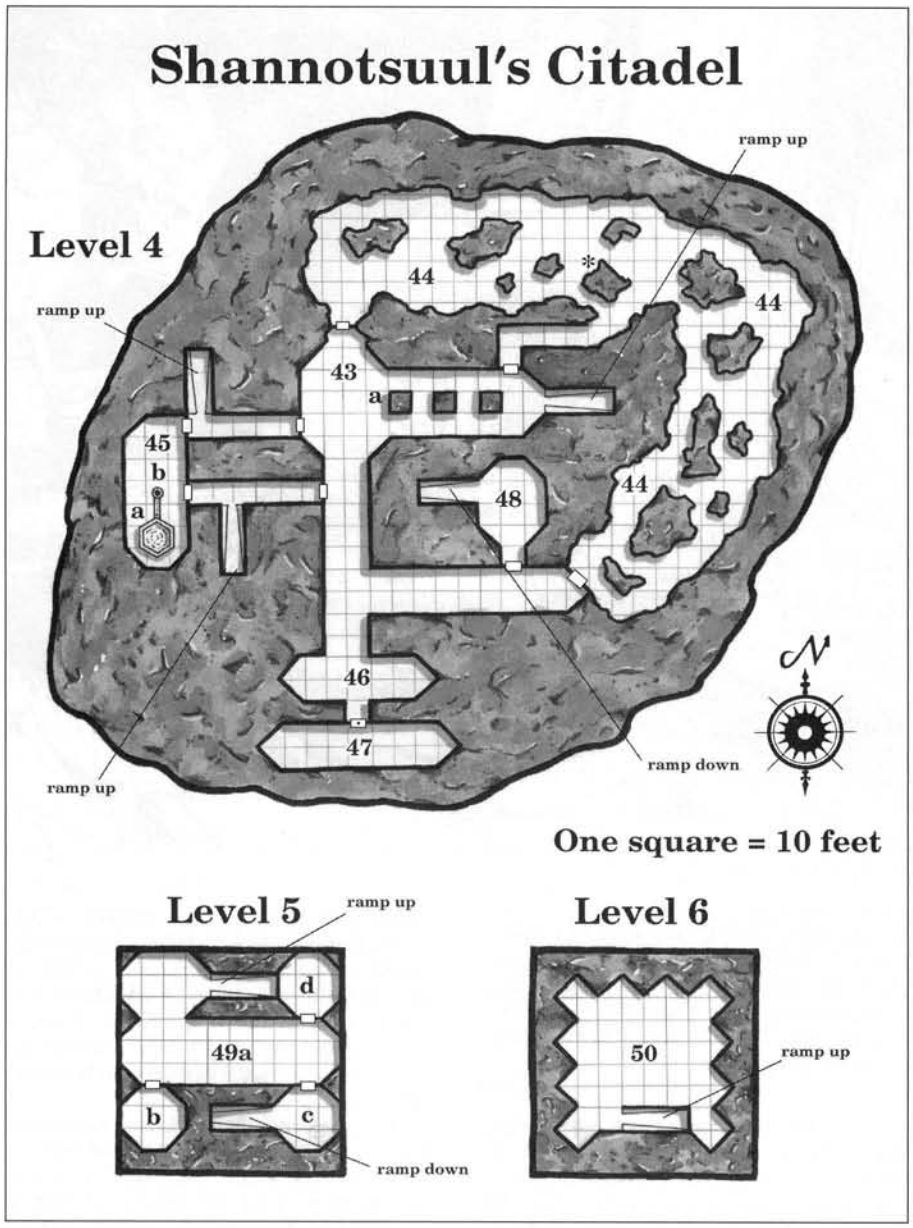
Derro thralls live here when not working. There are currently fourteen derro in the room. Half of them are sleeping but awaken once an alarm is sounded, joining combat the following round. Four have been altered by the alhoon to possess eyes on long stalks, allowing them to see in all directions as well as detect invisible objects or PCs. Two others are mutants with six arms apiece.

The three pots contain a watery bean stew and rest on crystal slabs that become hot when touched. If touched for more than 1 round, a glowing crystal causes 1d3 points of damage per round from heat. The slabs are embedded in the floor. Next to the pots of stew are several ceramic water jugs.

The dry hydra carcass has enough pockets to house over forty derro. The sucker-tipped tentacles on the hydra carcass attach to sleeping derro and inject a fluid that renders them susceptible to *suggestion* and commands. PCs climbing on the hydra are attacked by 1d4 sucker tentacles. Anyone hit must make a successful saving throw vs. poison or become susceptible to telepathic commands (that is, suffers a –6 penalty to *suggestion*, *charm*, or *domination* effects) for 1 hour. Behind the hydra husk are several large, covered chamber pots set into pits in the floor.

The derro thralls attack any non-illithid they see with ceramic bowls, food pots, or stones for 1d4 points of damage. They concentrate their attacks on unarmored PCs. If combat goes against them, several pick up wads of dried moss bedding, set them aflame (using the hot crystal slabs), and hurl them at PCs. The flaming detritus causes 1d6 points of damage and ignites exposed combustibles unless the items make a successful saving throw vs. normal fire. If their morale fails, the thralls retreat down the ramp to area **44** and hide. The thralls have been allowed to accumulate a small amount of treasure. There is a 50% chance of finding 2d6 sp within each of the pockets carved into the hydra. One pocket is covered with a woven rug worth 25 gp.

Area **42b** is the mongrelman quarters. The floor is covered with rich, damp earth. The mongrelman thralls make their home in a large hammock of living vines that grow up



the walls and hang from the ceiling. The vines are covered in edible leaves and seed pods containing nourishing beans. The bright crystal walls provide illumination for the plants. The mongrelmen harvest the leaves and pods, providing food for the other thralls. They do not attack PCs and do not flee unless they are attacked. They know the location of every monster in the citadel but do not volunteer information unless directly questioned. They possess no treasure but have large caches of food and water hidden throughout the room.

Derro (8): AC 8; MV 9; HD 3; hp 12 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; MR 30%; SZ S; ML 12; Int very (11); AL CE; XP 175; *MM*/96.

Derro with eyestalks (4): AC 8; MV 9; HD 3; hp 12 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SD *detect invisible* at will, all-around sight (cannot be surprised); MR 30%; SZ S; ML 12; Int very (11); AL CE; XP 175; *MM*/96 (derro, variant).

Multi-armed derro mutants (2): AC 6; MV 12; HD 6; hp 26, 23, 20; THAC0 15; #AT 4; Dmg 1d6+1 (×4); MR 30%; SZ M; ML 12; Int very (12); AL CE; XP 175; *MM*/96 (derro, variant). Each derro mutant is armed with four heavy clubs.

Hydra-spawned sucker tentacles (12): AC 8; MV 0; HD ½; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 0; SA poison (see above); SZ T; ML 20; Int non (0); AL N; XP 65; New monster.

Mongrelmen (12): AC 5; MV 9; HD 2; hp 9 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SD mimicry, camouflage; SZ M; ML 12; Int average (8); AL LN; XP 65; *MM*/257.

43. Central Gallery.

> A row of three stone pillars runs down the center of this hall. Iron shackles hang from the top of each pillar. Most are empty, but from one set hangs a young man clothed in rags. His hair is slick with thick, green liquid. Shuffling toward him are three hulking brutes covered with white fur.

The man in shackles (at the point marked "**a**") is Lazat Lan, an illithid who accidentally failed to undergo physiological transformation after being implanted with an illithid tadpole; thus, he has become an illithid trapped in human form. Despite his appearance, he must still ingest brains. Shannotsuul kidnapped Lazat before he could be sent out as a weapon against the surface-dwelling humans.

Lazat Lan's head is coated with psionic-nullifying gel (see area **29**) that will wear off in 1d6 turns. Moving toward him are three quaggoth thralls instructed to apply more green gel. (They each carry one vial.) The thralls attack the PCs on sight. Lazat attempts to make PCs believe he is a human held captive by illithids. Lazat admits to possessing psionic powers and explains that the green gel nullifies his natural psychic ability. He begs the PCs to release his bonds. If freed, he accompanies the PCs, offering any advice he can. (He knows about the githyanki in area **25**, the alhoon in area **35**, and Shannotsuul in area **49**.) He turns on the PCs at the most opportune moment, hitting them with a *mind blast* and attempting to feed the only way he can—by using a nearby sword or ax as a "can opener." If PCs are led past this area while under alhoon escort, Lazat calls out to them for help.

Lazat Lan (illithid): AC 5; MV 12; HD 8+4; hp 41; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SA/SD psionics; MR 90%; SZ M; ML 18; Int genius (18); AL LE; XP 7,000; MR 30%; *MM*/251 (illithid, variant).

Psionics Summary: #AT 1; MTHAC0 10; MAC 5; Lv 10; PSPs 324; Psionic Attacks—EW, II, MB; Psionic Defenses—All; Psionic Disciplines—*control body, levitation, body equilibrium, probability travel, teleport, astral projection, domination, awe, ESP, post-hypnotic suggestion*, taste link**.

* See *The Illithiad* for details on these new disciplines, replace with others, or ignore them.

Quaggoth thralls (3): AC 6; MV 12; HD 2+2; hp 11 each; THAC0 19; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1d4/1d4 or by weapon; SA berserk rage; SD immune to poison; SZ L; ML 16; Int low (5); AL N; XP 175; *MM*/298.

44. Watchdog Chamber. This cave complex is completely dark and hewn from rough stone. Two intellect devourers claim this large area as their hunting ground. The devourers make their nest in a killer mimic that they have *dominated* for their amusement.

Besides the intellect devourers and mimic, the caverns are home to a non-combative form of ustilagor created by Shannotsuul; they appear as larval intellect devourers but are highly poisonous to illithids, who must make a saving throw vs. poison at a –4 penalty or die upon consuming one. Over thirty of them stalk the caverns, but they pose no threat. Read the following as PCs approach the mimic (indicated by the asterisk on the map):

> A large cyst with a rough brown exterior is fastened to the wall. A small opening on the cyst's surface slowly dilates, revealing a moist interior covered in brown moss inside which you spot glints of silver, gold, and metal vaguely resembling a sword hilt.

The silver, gold, and sword hilt are lures created by the mimic to entice PCs. The mimic exudes its glue to hold fast anyone who touches it. The devourers attempt to hide nearby, using *reduction* and *chameleon power* to remain undetected until the PCs engage the mimic in combat, whereupon they pounce on the two rearmost PCs, unleashing psionic and claw attacks simultaneously.

Intellect devourers (2): AC 4; MV 15; HD 6+6, hp 37, 29; THAC0 13; #AT 4; Dmg 1d4 (×4); SA psionics; SD +3 or better weapons to hit, spell immunities; SZ M; ML 18; Int very (12); AL CE; XP 6,000; *MM*/207.

Psionics Summary: #AT 1; MTHAC0 12; MAC 7; Lv 8; PSPs 200 each; Psionic Attacks—EW, II; Psionic Defenses—IF, MB, MBk, TS; Psionic Disciplines—*ectoplasmic form, body equilibrium, chameleon power, expansion, reduction, astral projection, domination, mindlink, aversion, telempathic projection.*

Killer mimic: AC 7; MV 3; HD 10; hp 51; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 3d4; SA glue; SD camouflage; SZ L; ML 13; Int semi (4); AL NE; XP 3,000; *MM*/250.

45. Water Pool.

> A hexagonal pool of bubbling water lends a relaxing sound to this room. The water flows from the pool through a narrow groove carved into the floor, where it vanishes into a drain. Several ceramic and stone jars sit by the pool's edge. A lone, fur-covered humanoid extends his long arms into the water. Several leathery sacks seem to hang from his shoulders and back.

The large pool carved into the floor holds the citadel's supply of fresh water, provided by a *decanter of endless water* that rests at the bottom of the pool (marked "**a**" on the map). The drain (marked "**b**" on the map) consists of a 5'-deep open pit with a permanent, one-way *dimension door* facet at the bottom. Anything touching the facet—water, refuse, or a falling PC—is instantly transported outside the citadel to area **18**, 300 feet above the cavern floor.

The quaggoth has been mutated by the alhoon to carry and distribute water; his arms end in open, toothless mouths that can draw in or expel water from large bladders on his shoulders and back. It attacks any non-illithid who enters, attempting to push a PC into the drain using jets of water that strike opponents as AC 10 plus Dexterity or magical bonuses. The quaggoth can shoot up to three jets of water once per round in addition to its regular claw attacks. If a jet hits, the opponent suffers no damage but must make a Strength check or be knocked back 1d6+4 feet.

One of the small jars next to the pool is made of polished agate (worth 300 gp).

Quaggoth mutant: AC 6; MV 12; HD 2+2; hp 17; THAC0 19; #AT 2; Dmg 1d4/1d4; SA berserk rage, water jet; SD immune to poison; SZ L; ML 16; Int low (6); AL N; XP 175; *MM*/298 (quaggoth, variant).

46. Feeding Stocks.

> Over a dozen sets of stocks are stored here. Most are made of stout wood with metal banding. One in particular catches your eye—it is almost twice the size of the others and is composed of dull black metal.

Feeding stocks are kept here. The large set of stocks is constructed of adamantite and is capable of securing Large-sized creatures. Since the stocks are composed of drow metal, they decay almost immediately if exposed to sunlight (as explained in *MM*/112–113).

47. Cell. The membranous door to this chamber is twice as thick as the normal doors in the citadel and is locked. The inside frame of the door is imprinted with psionic circuitry that delivers a mild electrical shock (inflicting 1d6 points of damage) whenever the inside surface of the door or doorframe is touched. PCs approaching within 10 feet of the door do not see the psionic circuitry but hear loud noises, bangs, and screams from beyond the portal.

The cell is designed to hold captured subterranean humanoids doomed to become thralls or food. Currently, raucous gibberlings inhabit the cell. They have been deprived of weapons, and five have died from the psionic circuitry protecting the door. (Their corpses have been partially devoured by the other gibberlings, and the remains are strewn upon the floor.) The gibberlings attack anyone they can reach. They have no treasure.

Gibberlings (36): AC 10; MV 9; HD 1; hp 6 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (fists); SA overbearing; SW avoid bright light; SZ S–M; ML 5; Int low (5); AL CN; XP 35; *MM*/149.

48. Crystal Guardians.

> This chamber is decorated with a heavy, green crystal table and six uncomfortable-looking, pale-white crystal chairs. Affixed to the corner walls are four human visages carved from chunks of dark green crystals.

The four crystal visages affixed to the four corners of the room contain obliviax moss. PCs inspecting the masks can see the black, speckled moss embedded deep within, although the moss is easily mistaken for a discoloration or impurity in the crystal.

The obliviax masks can sense intelligent creatures within 30 feet. (Although the crystal masks protect the obliviax, they reduce the effective range of the moss's attacks.) Any victim attacked by an obliviax mask must make a successful saving throw vs. spell or lose all memory of the past 24 hours, as well as all memorized spells. An obliviax can drain the memories of only one victim every 24 hours; thus, it chooses spellcasters over other potential victims. An obliviax mask can cast any spell it absorbs and uses stolen spells to keep intruders from reaching area **49**. The obliviax are willing thralls of Shannotsuul. They do not attack anyone accompanied by the ulitharid or its alhoon servants.

The obliviax masks aren't this chamber's only guardians. Two of the six crystal chairs are actually crysmals in disguise. The crysmals do not reveal their presence until the PCs enter the room and head toward area **49**, at which point the creatures attack using psionics. They do not attack PCs accompanied by the ulitharid or the alhoon and engage in melee only after their true nature is revealed. The crysmals cannot shift through the walls of the citadel like they can through normal rock.

Crysmals (2): AC 0 (–4 vs. slashing and piercing weapons); MV 6; HD 6+6; hp 49, 37; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 3d4; SA crystal missile (inflicts 1d8+8 points of damage; after firing its missile, regular melee damage drops from 3d4 points to 2d4 points per successful attack); SD unaffected by fire- or cold-based attacks; electricity causes one-quarter damage (none if the saving throw succeeds); impervious to poisons and gases; SW *glassee* spell blinds crysmal for 1d4+1 rounds, *stone to flesh* lowers AC to 6 for 1 round; SZ S (3' tall); ML 16; Int high (14); AL NE; XP 4,000; *MCA1*.

Psionics Summary: #AT 1; MTHAC0 13; MAC 9; Lv 7; PSPs 100 each; Psionic Attacks—MT, EW; Psionic Defenses—MBk; Psionic Disciplines—*animate object, appraise, change sound, contact, create sound, ESP, mindwipe,*

Torn by two minds, the ulitharid Shannotsuul passes judgment on its newest thrall.

probe, project force, psychic drain, receptacle, soften, stasis field.

Crystal obliviax masks (4): AC 1 (*glassteel* spell); MV 0; HD 4+4; hp 30 each; THAC0 nil; #AT 1; Dmg special; SA memory drain, cast stolen spells; SD immune to *shatter* spells, fire, and cold-based attacks; slashing and piercing weapons inflict half damage; impervious to poison and gases; SW susceptible to plant-based magic; SZ S; ML 9; INT average (9); AL N; XP 175; *MM*/293 (plant, intelligent).

49. Shannotsuul's Chambers. Read or paraphrase the following as the PCs descend the ramp into this chamber:

> A feminine voice rings out clear and strong within your head. "I have not seen kin in many years. Welcome." At the base of the ramp stands a 7'-tall figure dressed in a purple hooded robe, its glistening mauve arms left bare by the raiment. The creature's arms are crisscrossed with intricate tattoos that glow faintly. A long, trailing crimson veil covers its face, leaving only large white eyes exposed. An embroidered sash is tied around its waist; pouches and pendants made from precious stones hang from it. The figure carries a 4'-long metal rod topped with a chip of obsidian.

Shannotsuul hopes to negotiate with the PCs. She cares little for her thralls and servants and does not harbor ill-will toward PCs for earlier combats. She feels out the PCs' intentions using blunt questions and *ESP*. If the PCs' intentions seem benign, Shannotsuul explains who she is and what she is doing. PCs who are sympathetic to her anti-illithid cause are treated well. PCs who do not affirm her goals and don't agree to become allies in her war against the illithids enrage her. Such PCs she turns into hapless thralls.

In combat, Shannotsuul attempts to incapacitate PCs so that they can be turned into thralls. She uses her *mind blast*, against which all saving throws suffer a –1 penalty, followed by *slow* (cast on fighters), *feeblemind* (cast on wizards), and *eyebite*.

Shannotsuul has the unique ability to open and close the *anti-magic shell* surrounding the citadel instantly with a thought. If reduced to 20 or fewer hit points, the ulitharid attempts to flee by opening the *anti-magic shell* and escaping via *probability travel*, dropping a strange pulsing white gem on the floor as she departs. (All of these actions can be done in a single round.) The gem is imprinted with psionic circuitry that triggers an overload in the circuitry that suspends the citadel. Once the gem is activated (that is, once Shannotsuul drops it on the floor), destroying the gem does nothing. The soft pastel glow emanating from the walls becomes increasingly harsh, and a low vibration is felt throughout the entire citadel. After 10 rounds, the light is almost blinding; the citadel shudders as cracks begin to form in the walls. After 12 rounds, the citadel lists and falls, striking the rift floor and shattering. Anyone inside suffers 1d10 × 10 points of damage and has a 50% chance of being buried under crystal and rock rubble for an additional 1d8 points of damage each round until rescued. Everything inside the citadel is destroyed or ruined in the crash.

The destruction of the citadel plunges the entire chasm into total darkness. At the DM's discretion, the shockwave could attract underground monsters eager to investigate the disturbance.

Shannotsuul (ulitharid): AC 3; MV 12, swim 14; HD 11+8; hp 68; THAC0 9; #AT 6; Dmg 1d4 (×6); SA psionics; SD spell immunities; MR 95%; SZ L; ML 19; Int supra-genius (19); AL N; XP 14,000; *MCA1* (illithid, ulitharid) or *The Illithiad* supplement.

Spells (4/4/4/4/4/1): 1st—*burning hands, light, magic missile, unseen servant*; 2nd—*forget, glitterdust, know alignment, strength*; 3rd—*item, lightning bolt, slow, vampiric touch*; 4th—*enervation, Otiluke's resilient sphere, minor creation, wall of fire*; 5th—*wall of force, cloudkill, feeblemind, lower resistance**; 6th—*eyebite*. Spells marked with an asterisk appear in the *Tome of Magic*. Other spells can be freely substituted.

Psionics Summary: #AT 1; MTHAC0 10; MAC 4; Lv 10; PSPs 420; Psionic Attacks—EW, II, MB; Psionic Defenses—All; Psionic Disciplines—*control body, levitation, body equilibrium, probability travel, teleport, astral projection, domination, awe, ESP, post-hypnotic suggestion*, taste link*, imprint psionic circuitry*, fatal attraction**.

* See *The Illithiad* for details on these new disciplines, or replace them with others.

The metal rod Shannotsuul carries is a *rod of smiting* with 31 charges. Shannotsuul possesses three objects inscribed with psionic seals: a ring of polished serpentine that heals 2d8 hit points twice per day (worth 4,000 gp), a turquoise pendant hanging on her sash that *hastes* the wearer for 1d6+4 rounds once per day (worth 4,500 gp), and a ruby brooch that allows the wearer to absorb and negate one 1st- to 4th-level spell cast directly at her once per day (worth 6,000 gp). The ulitharid might possess other items at the DM's discretion.

49a. Longevity Fluid. This 12'-high room is covered in thick cords and ridges of fungal growth combined with living neural matter. Twelve distended white bladders dangle from short stems, quivering with the pressure inside them. Small, ratlike vermin, each bearing a single yellow eye, scurry over the growths and carefully tend them. These creatures are harmless and non-combative.

Each bladder contains a psi-active fluid Shannotsuul drinks to extend her life and keep the ulitharid personality suppressed. If poked with a sharp object it bursts, releasing a bitter clear liquid which, if drunk, makes the drinker 1d6 months younger. The liquid loses its potency 1 turn after being removed from the bladder.

49b. Shannotsuul's Bedroom. The ulitharid's bedroom is decorated in human fashion with a large bed, well-appointed crystal desk, and several bookshelves carved into the walls. The books (written in Common) discuss magical research, races of the Underdark, and psionic powers. The intact collection of 160 books is worth 8,500 gp to a sage. The desk drawers are *wizard locked* and hold Shannotsuul's journals, written in Qualith. They take time to translate, even with *comprehend languages*, but provide information on her history and encounters with illithids over the years. The seventeen journals are worth 200 gp each to a sage.

49c. Ramp. The room contains a ramp that descends to area **50**. In the wall at the top of the ramp is a secret compartment protected by a *fire trap* spell (1d4+12 points of damage). Inside the compartment are two pendants. Made of blue-tinted crystal and shaped like spiraling tentacles, the pendants render their wearers immune to the harmful effects of the prismatic light in area **50**. They are worth 500 gp apiece as jewelry and have no other magical properties.

49d. Shannotsuul's Laboratory. This chamber serves as the ulitharid's magical laboratory. A large crystal table stands against the west wall. Atop the table rests a 1' × 1' × 1' metal box holding three 4"-diameter orbs of petrified fungus filled with lithium. These are flash grenades that explode brilliantly upon impact. Anyone with infravision who is caught within 30 feet of the flash must make a successful saving throw vs. paralyzation at a –3 penalty or be stunned for 1d4+1 rounds. Three scrolls, each with a *polymorph self* spell written at 12th level, lay next to the box.

Other items on the table include a metal helmet resting on a carved wooden head. When worn, the helm automatically expends 1 charge per turn and projects a telepathic dampening field that jams all telepathic communication within 120 feet. The helmet has six charges and cannot be recharged.

Nestled on a shelf above the work table is Shannotsuul's collection of preserved brains, with samples taken from various evil races in the Underdark. Such a collection would be worth 300 gp to a sage who specializes in anatomy.

A crystal claw seems to rise naturally from the middle of the floor. A potion of *stone giant strength* is hidden inside a bowl of dried green mushrooms clutched in the crystal talons. The bowl holds twelve mushrooms, each of which heals 1d8 points of damage when eaten. If Shannotsuul sustains damage but overcomes the PCs, she heals herself by devouring one or more of these mushrooms.

50. Prismatic Crystalline Chamber. The light here is constantly changing in intensity and color. The psionic energy in this room keeps the citadel afloat.

> The walls, floor, and ceiling of this chamber pulse with energy and prismatic light. The disorienting light mixes in bizarre patterns and weaves through the air, creating patterns that change and dissolve.

Anyone entering this room without first wearing a protective pendant (see area **49c**) must make a successful saving throw vs. spell at a –4 penalty or be stunned for 3d4 rounds by the prismatic light. Shannotsuul is not affected by the light; however, the energy coursing through the chamber has a dampening effect on psionics. The room completely absorbs psionic energy such that no psionic abilities function within its confines and creatures inhabiting the room are shielded against all forms of psionic attack and scrying.

A secret compartment in the floor holds Shannotsuul's spellbook, which contains the following spells: 1st—*alarm, burning hands, light, magic missile, unseen servant*; 2nd—*alter self, forget, glitterdust, invisibility, know alignment, magic mouth, pyrotechnics, strength, web, wizard lock*; 3rd—*blink, item, lightning bolt, nondetection, slow, sepia snake sigil, spirit armor*, vampiric touch*; 4th—*charm monster, enchanted weapon, enervation, fear, fire trap, ice storm, mask of death*, minor creation, plant growth, polymorph self, wall of fire, unluck*, vacancy*; 5th—*advanced illusion, airy water, animate dead, cloudkill, feeblemind, lower resistance*, magic jar, mind fog*, telekinesis, wall of force*; 6th—*anti-magic shell, claws of the umber hulk*, enchant an item, eyebite, mislead, programmed illusion, repulsion, shades, true seeing, veil*. Spells marked with an asterisk appear in the *Tome of Magic*.

Aside from the disorienting light, psionic disruption, and hidden spellbook, this room is empty.

Concluding the Adventure

When PCs return from the citadel, Akwest, if alive, wants to know everything that happened and demands his share of the treasure. PCs who withhold treasure or the truth from the beholder are attacked. (Akwest is a lawful creature and expects the PCs to honor their end of the agreement.) If the PCs destroy the citadel, Akwest flies into a horrible rage and punishes them for their carelessness. The beholder is equally furious if the PCs claim to have confronted but not destroyed Shannotsuul. Akwest considers the ulitharid a direct threat to his Underdark dominion and demands that the PCs destroy her, attacking them if they do not comply.

Experience Points and Story Goals

Discovering Akwest's desire to investigate the citadel earns 5,000 XP. PCs who slay Akwest or otherwise stop the beholder from menacing Ammath receive a story award of 14,000 XP. Investigating the citadel and uncovering Shannotsuul's history earns 10,000 XP. PCs do not receive an additional story award for killing Shannotsuul.

If the PCs succeed only in angering the beholder or ulitharid but leave them alive, they receive no story awards and might have to defend Ammath from a beholder or illithid attack in the future. Ω

At the Sleeping Dragon Inn, terror can assume some familiar forms.

THE DOOR TO DARKNESS

BY JAMES WYATT

Phantasmal foes

"Sleeping Dragon Inn" Created by Dan Bartman
Artwork by Terry Dykstra
Cartography and Poster Map by Diesel

After writing dozens of articles for DRAGON® Magazine *and five modules for* DUNGEON® Adventures, *James was hired as a roleplaying game designer at Wizards of the Coast. Welcome to the family, James!*

"The Door To Darkness" is an AD&D® adventure for 3–6 good-aligned PCs of levels 1–9. Encounters in the adventure have three sets of statistics. Use the first set for PCs of levels 1–3, the second set for PCs of levels 4–6, and the third set for PCs of levels 7–9. The adventure takes place in the Sleeping Dragon Inn, which is fully detailed in *DRAGON® Magazine* #272.

Adventure Background

Mimikeur the red dragon lay dead in the fields. The quartet of dwarven heroes who slew the beast hauled their weary bones to the nearest town, secured the best lodging available (paid with gold from the dragon's hoard), and rested in the lap of luxury until they reached full strength once more. Townsfolk and country dwellers brought an endless stream of gifts to their suites, humble but heartfelt tokens of gratitude for the liberation the dwarves had secured for them.

The townsfolk soon forgot their own local hero, the wizard Aristeos. An illusionist of no small accomplishment, Aristeos had defended the town in his own way many times over the years. No reclusive scholar, he lived and labored in a stylish house near the center of the community. He thrived on the attentions of the townspeople, who supported his studies and inflated his ego in gratitude for the many small favors and minor acts of heroism he performed on their behalf.

When the dwarves came, flushed with their victory over the dragon whose power had always proven too great for the wizard, Aristeos suddenly found himself a has-been, cut off from the attentions and affections of the townspeople. No more gifts of food or clothing appeared on his doorstep. No young women gazed flirtatiously at his windows while they walked past. When strangers came to town, no one spoke proudly of "our wizard"—only of "our dwarves, the dragonslayers." Aristeos seethed with jealous rage.

He was never a particularly violent sort, and the four dwarven heroes could easily have bested him in combat anyway. So he plotted a subtler revenge, one that took years to come to fruition. When two of the dwarves opened an inn a day's journey from town, near the skeletal remains of the dragon they had slain, Aristeos found his opportunity.

On a night when both dwarven proprietors are away from the Sleeping Dragon Inn, and when the PCs happen to be passing through and staying at the inn, Aristeos sets his plan in motion. Using illusions and deceit,

he hopes to ruin the inn's business by giving it a reputation for being haunted, while painting himself as the hero who drives away the evil spirits. Unfortunately for Aristeos, the PCs, and everyone at the Sleeping Dragon Inn that night, the inn *is* haunted, in a way. Built atop the ruins of the ancient elven city of Fey-Aryth, the inn stands in perilous proximity to the unspeakable Darkness that caused the city's downfall and still haunts its buried ruins. Aristeos's magic provides a gateway for that Darkness to creep within the inn's safe walls, and he quickly loses control over his planned revenge. Without the heroes' valiant action, the Sleeping Dragon Inn might well be swallowed up in the same seething Darkness.

The Nightmare Begins

The PCs are traveling along one of the two major merchant routes that run past the Sleeping Dragon Inn. They might be hired as caravan guards, traveling to or from another adventure, or on the road for any other reason you devise.

As the PCs approach the Sleeping Dragon Inn, the muted sounds of conversation and laughter greet their ears. If they are riding, Veru—a huge man with ashen skin and broad shoulders—emerges from the stables and takes their horses without a word. Wooden double doors lead into the taproom—brightly lit, well heated, and pleasantly noisy after the solitude of the road.

Read or paraphrase the following description when the PCs enter the taproom:

> A cursory glance around the inn's common room confirms that the patrons are the usual crowd for a remote roadside tavern—which is to say, they are anything but usual. From the ogre bouncer casually leaning against the wall beside the bar, to the mercifully quiet gnome behind the counter, to the beautiful monk in the corner with her two burly acolytes, their faces shrouded beneath their robes, each person is unique if not peculiar. A handsome man in fashionable clothes sits on a stool at the bar, regaling the bartender and nearby customers with exciting tales of adventure. A farmer and his wife urge the storyteller on with their laughter, questions, and interjected comments. Two merchants at a table near the door seem to be haggling, while seven men you'd guess to be caravan guards fill two other tables. Three tables stand empty, two at the far end of the room opposite the fireplace and another near the well-dressed storyteller.

The PCs have arrived at an inconvenient time for the dwarven partners who own the inn, and a particularly convenient time for Aristeos. Both Chane and Garron are away—Garron is on a purchasing trip to a nearby town, while Chane is paying an important visit to Omer Caflethore, his former adventuring companion. In their absence, Gib the gnome is tending bar and keeping an eye on things. The beautiful, cloaked "monk" is Letia Morningclaw, flanked by her two brutish "acolytes." Aristeos hired these shady characters to protect him in the event that his plan goes awry. (See the "Monks Unmasked" sidebar for their statistics.) The storyteller is Aristeos; the farmer is Nalin Wulch, who lives up the road with his family. The merchants are traveling with separate caravans; their wagons are behind the stables, watched by additional guards. The merchants themselves have rooms rented in the inn for the night, while the caravan guards sleep with the wagons.

If the PCs settle themselves at the vacant tables, Valerie (the flirtatious young barmaid) brings them food and drink and arranges their lodging with Gib at the bar. Three rooms in the inn are available tonight (areas **F8**, **F9**, and **F10** on the inn map). The standard rate is 5 sp per room per night, but there is an extra 1 sp charge for each additional person sleeping in a room. Alternatively, the PCs can deal directly with Gib and head straight up to their rooms, although the inn does not offer room service. If they do not spend time in the taproom, they hear the effects of Aristeos's spell from their rooms and can join the action in progress.

While the PCs consume their meals and drinks, read or paraphrase the following description. You will need to modify the text accordingly if the PCs are resting in their private rooms:

> The wind outside begins howling in the chimney, and the flames in the fireplace flicker in a grotesque dance. A hush falls over the room. The wind grows stronger, the howling more intense. In a moment the sound is like a roaring chorus of ghostly voices shouting their misery in some long-forgotten language. The farmer's wife shrieks and the barmaid drops a tray on the floor. The howling continues, spilling out from the chimney to fill the room, sending the other patrons into a panic.
>
> The gnome produces a crossbow from behind the bar and loads it, looking warily toward the fireplace while remaining behind the cover of the bar counter. The ogre bouncer lumbers over to the fireplace and makes as if to peer up the flue before pulling his head back, singed from the flames. The caravan guards and the hulking acolytes in the corner leap to their feet as if to take action, but no obvious action suggests itself. The other patrons remain in their seats looking terrified, some clutching their hands to their ears.

Aristeos

Aristeos is a handsome man, about 40, with well-groomed dark hair and impeccable taste in clothes. His clean-shaven face is starting to show signs of age, but his incipient wrinkles accentuate his charming smile and his rich brown eyes. He is outgoing and gregarious; he all but feeds on the attention of others and ingratiates himself into the center of everyone's world without appearing rude or self-centered.

Low-level: **Aristeos, human male W(Ill)4**: AC 8; MV 12; hp 11; THAC0 19 (base); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; Str 7 (–1/0), Dex 16, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 17; SZ M; ML 16; AL N; XP 650; *dagger of throwing +1, robe of blending*.

Spells (4/3): 1st—*audible glamer, phantasmal force* (×2), *unseen servant*; 2nd—*improved phantasmal force* (×2), *invisibility*.

Medium-level: **Aristeos, human male W(Ill)7**: AC 6; MV 12; hp 19; THAC0 18 (base); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; Str 7 (–1/0), Dex 16, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 17; SZ M; ML 16; AL N; XP 4,000; *dagger of throwing +3, ring of invisibility, cloak of protection +2*.

Spells (5/4/3/2): 1st—*audible glamer, phantasmal force* (×2), *spook, unseen servant*; 2nd—*blindness, blur, hypnotic pattern, mirror image*; 3rd—*spectral force* (×2), *suggestion*; 4th—*improved invisibility, phantasmal killer*.

High-level: **Aristeos, human male W(Ill)10**: AC 3; MV 12; hp 28; THAC0 17 (base); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; Str 7 (–1/0), Dex 16, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 17; SZ M; ML 16; AL N; XP 7,000; *dagger of throwing +4, ring of invisibility, cloak of protection +2, bracers of defense AC 5*.

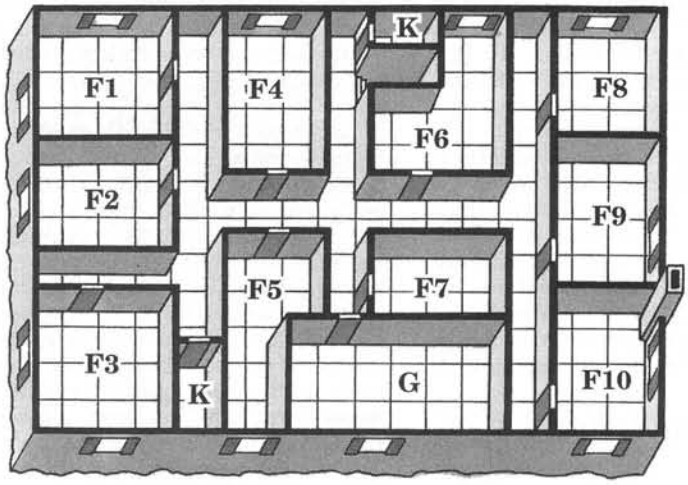
Spells (5/5/4/4/3): 1st—*audible glamer, phantasmal force* (×2), *spook, unseen servant*; 2nd—*blindness, blur, hypnotic pattern, mirror image, summon swarm*; 3rd—*gust of wind, hold person, spectral force, suggestion*; 4th—*fear, improved invisibility, phantasmal killer*; 5th—*advanced illusion, nightmare, summon shadow*.

Aristeos pauses his story for a draft of wine and uses his wine cup to conceal his spellcasting, muffling the verbal component and distracting from the simple gesture he performs with his other hand, which also holds the material component of the *audible glamer* spell. A fine actor, he seems just as disturbed as the other patrons, covering his ears with a grimace and turning away from the source of the sound.

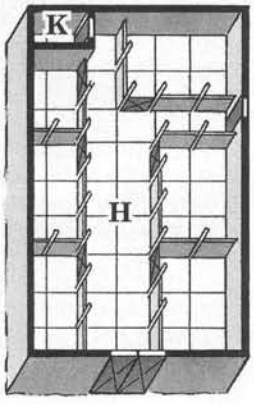
In a moment, Aristeos actually becomes at least as disturbed as the other patrons, for his spell has some unexpected effects. In the second round, as the howling gains in volume and intensity, the fire in the fireplace dims and

The Sleeping Dragon Inn

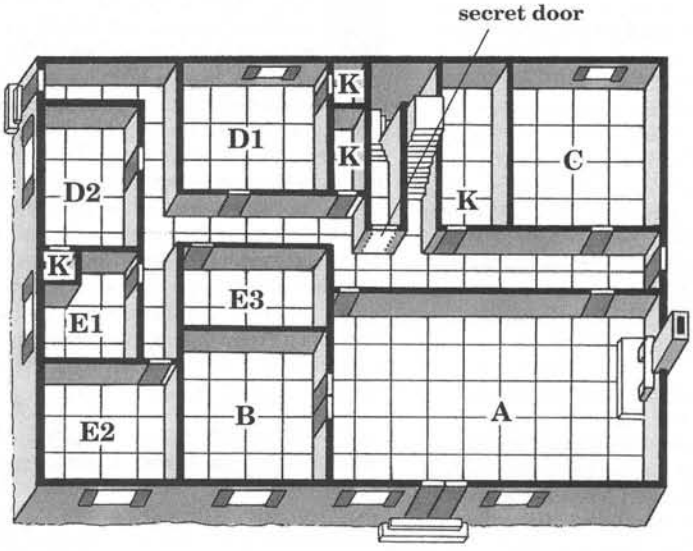
One square = 5 feet



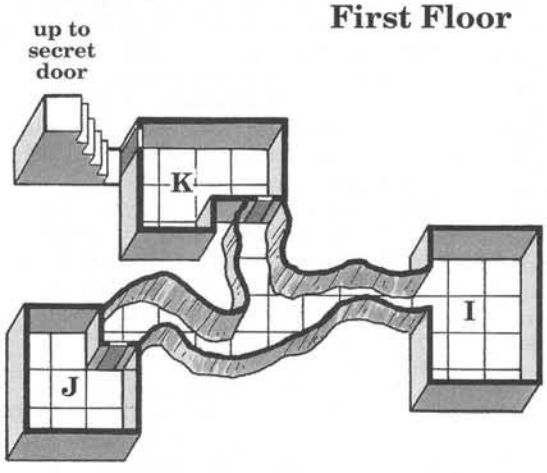
Second Floor



Stables



First Floor



Basement

a palpable chill seeps into the room. In the third round, a wind blows through the room as though the air were being sucked into the fireplace and up the chimney. Meanwhile, the volume of the howling increases steadily, well beyond the volume Aristeos's spell is capable of, until every eardrum in the inn aches from the bone-chilling sound and the NPC patrons are on the floor, clutching their ears.

Aristeos's spell combined with the latent magical energies of Fey-Aryth to produce a most unwanted effect: opening a portal for the dark energies that destroyed that ancient elven city. These energies, in the form of creatures called figments, lend a degree of reality to Aristeos's illusions, eventually taking control of his spellcasting to work their evil will. (See the "Figments" sidebar for details.)

The howling continues for 5 rounds. When it finally stops, the room's inhabitants are left with ringing ears and frayed nerves. Gib nervously tries to reassure the patrons that everything will be fine, but everyone is visibly shaken. Finally giving up, he implores everyone present for help, but no one other than the PCs steps forward to volunteer. Gib offers free room and board in exchange for the PCs' help, and a cask of the inn's famous (and highly intoxicating) Black Pudding liquor. More than monetary reward, he hopes the PCs are motivated by true heroism.

The rest of the inn staff is no help. Ox, the ogre bouncer, insists on escorting the Wulches up the road to their farm. Gib claims to have sworn off weaponry in favor of his tools, and he's no leader. Stump, the halfling cook, can be found cowering in his largest kettle in the kitchen after the howling incident. Veru, who took the PCs' horses and led them into the stable, is nowhere to be found—a superstitious man, he ran off down the road when the howling reached its full intensity.

None of the other patrons is willing or able to help the PCs in the investigation.

Waking Nightmares

Despite his ringing ears, Aristeos is pleased with the success of his first spell, somehow convincing himself that he is more powerful than even he realized before. He continues his revenge as planned, even as events spiral well out of his control.

The encounters described below are generally keyed to locations within the inn, though a few occur at specific times in the adventure. Use the "Monks Unmasked" sidebar when you decide that Aristeos perceives the PCs as a real threat to the success of his plan, and not just patsies who jump and panic in response to his illusions. "Dark Portal" is the climactic encounter and should occur only after the PCs have overcome every other encounter and returned to the taproom.

Regular Cast

Chane Glenshadow and **Garron Fledstane** are the proud founders and operators of the Sleeping Dragon Inn. Both dwarves are retired adventurers, and both are absent for the duration of this adventure.

Gib the gnome serves as Chane's and Garron's trusted assistant, handyman, and accountant. He runs the inn in the dwarves' absence and is often found tending bar.

Ox, the dimwitted ogre, serves as the inn's bouncer. He holds Chane, Garron, and Gib in highest esteem and can never be swayed to betray them.

Stump is the charismatic halfling chef whose full name is Neruth Smallfellow. The portly chef is best known for his cinnamon boiled grains, salted garlic and butter biscuits, and spiced pork and wild deer entrees.

Veru, the inn's burly stablehand, operates the stables outside the inn and maintains a small blacksmithing forge there. He uses the forge mainly to make horseshoes.

During the day, **Valerie**, **Mara**, and **Jez** work as chambermaids, keeping the inn neat and tidy. During the evenings, they work as barmaids serving drinks to the clientele. Valerie and Mara are slim girls, while Jez is a dominating, matronly figure.

A. Taproom. This cozy room remains mostly unchanged throughout the night. If the PCs return to the taproom before you are ready to close the adventure, they find Gib and 1d4 caravan guards keeping each other company, torches blazing. When you are ready for the climactic encounter, which should occur here, refer to the "Dark Portal" section.

B. Lounge. This is a fancier cousin to the usually busy taproom, a quieter room where patrons can enjoy a drink and conversation in more comfortable surroundings. It is richly furnished and decorated. If the PCs never explore the lounge, you can use this encounter in any other room with a window.

Read or paraphrase the following text to one selected PC:

> Windows can be unnerving at night. Inside, with your light, you know that someone or something outside can see you perfectly clearly, but you can't see out into the dark; all you can see is your own reflection. Actually, the reflection you see in the window is not yours: For just an instant a moldering corpse seems to stand in your place, empty eye sockets staring back at you, skull grinning in mockery.
>
> Then that figure of death emerges from the window and lunges to attack you!

Aristeos has cast his *phantasmal force* from a hiding place outside the inn, where he remains during this encounter, looking in the window at the PCs. Among the bushes, he is concealed by either his *robe of blending* or (if he is at least 7th level) his *ring of invisibility*.

The creature attacking the PC is an exact duplicate of the character, though it appears undead. The other PCs can see and fight the creature as well. It has the same hit points, attacks, Armor Class, special abilities, and equipment as the PC it resembles and might have additional abilities as well, depending on the party's level:

- For medium-level PCs (levels 4–6), the figment has 10% magic resistance and can only be struck by silver or magical weapons.
- For high-level PCs (levels 7–9), the figment drains one life energy level with a successful attack and can be hit only by +2 or better magical weapons. It has 25% magic resistance.

C. Kitchen.

> A metallic clang emanates from the kitchen, followed by a high-pitched cry of "Help!" The clanging continues, as if wild apes had been set loose to bang all the cooking pots.

Aristeos loosed an *unseen servant* with a ladle to bang the cooking pots in the kitchen. It moves slowly around the room, striking every metallic surface in sight. Stump, the halfling cook, cowers in fear behind the stove. If it is not dispelled, the *unseen servant* continues its banging for the spell's duration (1 hour + 1 turn/level). Since *unseen servant* is not an illusion spell, it remains unaffected by figments and operates as Aristeos intended.

Aristeos cast the *unseen servant* while Stump's back was turned, then promptly left the building through the door adjacent to the kitchen. His bootprints are visible in a patch of mud just outside that door, and a trained tracker could follow him to the scene of his next trick, wherever that might be.

D1. Merchant's Suite. One of the merchants the PCs saw in the taproom has rented this room for the night. After the initial excitement of the evening, he barricades himself in his room, pushing the dresser in front of the door, pulls his blanket over his head, and somehow manages to fall sound asleep.

D2. Aristeos's Suite. If the characters search Aristeos's room, they find nothing incriminating. Aristeos travels light—he is only staying one night and is not even planning to sleep

Figments

Aristeos's spells call into being strange creatures formed of illusion, shadow, and negative energy. Called figments, these creatures are free-willed and malevolent, though they appear in the forms shaped by Aristeos's illusion spells. The figments imbue his illusions with reality, however, making them truly dangerous to the PCs and other living creatures.

The strength of the figments depends on the level of the PC party.

- For low-level PCs (levels 1–3), the connection is tenuous and the figments are barely real. They have few hit points, a poor Armor Class, and inflict little damage with each attack. They have no unusual abilities.
- For mid-level PCs (levels 4–6), the figments have a stronger connection to reality. They have greater hit points and a better Armor Class, and they also possess 10% magic resistance. They can only be struck by silver or magical weapons.
- For high-level PCs (levels 7–9), the figments are nearly real, with still more hit points and much better Armor Class. These figments also drain one life energy level with a successful attack and have 25% magic resistance. They can be hit only by +2 or better magical weapons.

Since they are real, figments cannot be disbelieved.

It it not only Aristeos's spellcasting that attracts the figments. Any spell of the Illusion/Phantasm school cast within the inn takes on a reality appropriate to the strength of the figments in the adventure. If sent into combat, these illusions break free of their caster's control as soon as they are struck or damaged and act according to their chaotic evil alignment.

during that night. A heavy travel cloak hangs on a peg on the back of the door, and a clean outfit (tunic and breeches) is neatly folded on top of the dresser. A shoulder bag hangs from one of the bedposts, holding nothing but a scrap of lint. Careful examination of the lint reveals that it is wool, a key material component for many illusion spells.

E1. Jez's Room. This room is reserved for Jez, the matronly chambermaid. If the PCs try to explore the room, Valerie's shriek summons them to area **E2**, as described below.

E2. Mara and Valerie's Room.

> A shriek draws you to this room, though it is just the sort of surprised sound you'd expect from a young barmaid who'd spotted a mouse in her room. A half-second later, however, the shriek turns into a genuine, terrified scream.

Valerie has indeed spotted a mouse in her room—or, to be more precise, some kind of demon-rat created by Aristeos's *improved phantasmal force* and enlivened by a figment. When the PCs enter the room, Valerie is standing on her bed (against the west wall), still screaming, while Mara stands on hers, clutching a heavy glass bottle and peering warily under Valerie's bed, where the rat-thing is "hiding." Aristeos, concealed by his *robe of blending* or *ring of invisibility*, is peering in the girls' window to control the illusion, though he soon loses control of his creation.

If she can calm down, Valerie describes the creature as a huge rat, at least the length of her forearm, with night-black fur. Its eyes glowed red, she says, and when she shrieked it cackled gleefully while wringing its front paws together. Then it bared its monstrous fangs, stuck out a long, snakelike tongue, and darted under her bed when she screamed.

Aristeos has created 2–6 (two for low-level parties, four for medium-level parties, and six for high-level parties) of these figments. The demon-rats initially avoid the PCs, scurrying behind the dresser, between the beds, even up the walls and across the ceiling, where the PCs can get a good look at them. They sound like rats from hell should—horrible squeaks coupled with inhuman cackles just like Valerie describes. If Aristeos is 7th level or above, he uses *spectral force* instead of *improved phantasmal force* and gives the rats a sulfurous odor. As soon as a PC manages to hit one of them, however, the figments begin ignoring Aristeos's control and fiercely attack the PCs.

If the PCs chase the rats for more than 2 rounds, Jez appears in the doorway and yells at them until they manage to track the beasts down and destroy them.

For levels 1–3: **Demon rats** (2): AC 6; MV 12; HD 2; hp 7, 9; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SZ S; ML 14; Int semi (2); AL CE; XP 35; New monster.

For levels 4–6: **Demon rats** (4): AC 4; MV 12; HD 4; hp 14, 16, 18, 22; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4; SD silver or magic weapon to hit; MR 10%; SZ S; ML 14; Int semi (3); AL CE; XP 270; New monster.

For levels 7–9: **Demon rats** (6): AC 2; MV 12; HD 6; hp 21, 24, 24, 27, 33, 45; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 3d4; SA drain one level; SD +2 or better weapon to hit; MR 25%; SZ S; ML 14; Int semi (4); AL CE; XP 2,000; New monster.

E3. Stump's Room. Though the halfling cook sleeps in this room, he spends the majority of his time in the kitchen (area **C**), sometimes even rising from bed in the middle of the night to experiment with a new recipe. He stays in the kitchen for the duration of the adventure.

F1. Gib's Room. Gib the gnome calls this room home. It is littered with half-finished mechanical contraptions, empty bottles, and various tools. Gib usually clears a small space for himself on the bed every night; tonight he remains in the taproom (area **A**) with a handful of caravan guards for company.

F2. Veru's Room. The large man who tends the stables and works as a smith for the inn sleeps here most nights. He was in the stables when the howling began in the taproom and fled into the hills in terror. A superstitious man, he does not return to the inn until daylight. His room is immaculately kept, since Veru actually spends little time here.

F3. Ox's Room. The ogre bouncer sleeps here. The room looks and smells like an ogre's lair, despite Ox's good upbringing. Ox escorts the Wulches home after the incident in the taproom and does not return until the adventure is over.

F4. Merchant's Room. The other merchant the PCs saw in the taproom has rented this room. Like his competitor (see area **D1**), he was severely spooked by the howling in the taproom and has locked himself in his room in terror. However, he throws open the door, shortsword in hand, at every noise on the upstairs level. He pokes his head out the doorway, looks both ways down the hall, then loudly slams the door closed if he doesn't see anything suspicious. If he spots a PC or other character, he yells at them to stop the noise—"Inconsiderate oafs! You'll startle us to death!"—before slamming the door closed.

F5. Callran's Room. Callran is a woman in her early thirties who turned up at the Sleeping Dragon one day with no memory of her previous life. The dwarves took her under their wing, and she rents this room on a long-term basis while working at Nalin Wulch's farm to pay the bill. The only clue to her previous identity came when the farm was attacked by an orc raiding party, and Callran suddenly cast a spell into the fray. She still has no memory of being a wizard and cannot remember how to cast a spell outside the heat of battle.

Although she might have been brave and powerful before whatever tragedy erased her memory, the Wulches have treated her like a poor, lost child and she has adopted that persona. She is currently at the Wulch homestead, minding the Wulches' children.

F6. Letia's Room. Letia Morningclaw has rented this room for the night, using some of the money Aristeos paid her in advance. For

the duration of the adventure, she is shadowing the PCs or seated in the taproom (area **A**), always accompanied by her "acolyte" thugs. See the "Monks Unmasked" sidebar for more information.

F7. Thugs' Room. Letia's thugs are sharing this room, though they do not sleep for the duration of the adventure. They are with Letia at all times. See the "Monks Unmasked" sidebar for more information.

F8–F10. Spare Rooms. These three rooms are vacant when the PCs arrive, and some or all of them can be rented to the PCs. At some point during the evening, Aristeos sneaks into one of these rooms and creates a *phantasmal force* of a man sleeping soundly in the bed. The illusory person does nothing until the PCs disturb him, at which point he slowly floats to his feet and reaches hauntingly toward the nearest PC.

Aristeos uses his *invisibility* spell (or his *ring of invisibility* if he is at least 7th level) to hide completely unseen behind the chair in the room, casting *phantasmal force* just before the PCs enter the room. He tries to sneak out after the PCs destroy the figment-spectre, but if the PCs find and confront him, blocking his escape, then turn to the climactic encounter, "Dark Portal." If the PCs carefully search the room at some later time, they might (1-in-6 chance, or 2-in-6 for elves and half-elves) discover a tiny bit of fleece in the corner behind the chair: a portion of the spell's material component that Aristeos dropped while preparing the *phantasmal force* spell.

For levels 1–3: **Phantasmal figure**: AC 6; MV 15, fly 30 (B); HD 2; hp 9; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1–4; SZ M; ML 15; Int non (0); AL N; XP 65; New monster.

For levels 4–6: **Phantasmal figure**: AC 4; MV 15, fly 30 (B); HD 4+1; hp 21; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1–6; SD silver or magic weapons to hit; MR 10%; SZ M; ML 15; Int non (0); AL N; XP 270; New monster.

For levels 7–9: **Phantasmal figure**: AC 2; MV 15, fly 30 (B); HD 6+2; hp 33; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1–8; SA drain one level; SD +2 or better weapons to hit; MR 25%; SZ M; ML 15; Int non (0); AL N; XP 2,000; New monster.

G. Chane and Garron's Suite. The door to this room is locked, and it also sticks, forcing PCs to make a successful Open Doors roll to force it open. (Chane and Garron have chosen not to fix the door since it gives them added protection against would-be thieves or assassins). Aside from the dwarves' beds and personal belongings, the suite contains nothing particularly interesting or valuable.

H. Stables. Aristeos never turns his attention to the stables, and nothing unusual occurs here. If the PCs explore the stables at a time when Aristeos is concerned that their investigation might threaten his plan, Letia and her thugs set an ambush for them in the stables, though the basement is their preferred location. See the "Monks Unmasked" sidebar.

I–J. Wine Cellar and Brewery Cellar. The inn's basement is an ideal location for Letia Morningclaw and her accomplices to ambush the PCs if Aristeos begins to feel threatened by them. If the PCs explore the basement early in the adventure, Letia and her thugs plan the ambush for a different location at a later time. If the PCs enter the basement at an opportune time, Letia and her brute squad quietly follow them down the stairs and lay wait in the central area of the basement, jumping out to attack the PCs when they pass. See the "Monks Unmasked" sidebar for details.

K. Storage and Closet Areas. Most of the storage areas throughout the inn are uninteresting jumbles of supplies and tools. If the PCs explore either of the two upstairs closets, read or paraphrase the following description. Note that this encounter occurs only once.

> As the door swings open, a writhing nightmare of twisting darkness confronts you like an embodiment of your deepest fears. A mass of snakes formed of shadow—or are they bats with wings?—writhe and chitter and hiss. Their tiny red eyes leer at you from the chaos, tiny tongues dart out from between tiny fangs, and then the swarm erupts into a storm of fury. The creatures—whatever they are—cover you hungrily, while more fly over your heads and down the hall, slipping under doors in search of more food.

Monks Unmasked

Aristeos hired Letia Morningclaw and her hulking thugs to protect him while working his revenge on the dwarven owners of the Sleeping Dragon. Initially, the PCs' investigation of the apparent haunting of the inn does not concern him; he is overconfident and believes that their failure will only heighten his success. As things progress, however, he begins viewing them as a threat. Exactly when this happens is up to you to determine, but when it does, Letia and her accomplices are prepared. They set an ambush for the PCs—preferably in the basement, but possibly in the stables or another relatively secluded part of the inn. Letia uses her Hide in Shadows ability while the thugs confront the PCs directly. Read the PCs the following text:

> Monks indeed! The two hulking acolytes now stand before you, brandishing heavy morning stars as you approach. Their hoods are thrown back to reveal their battle-scarred faces, and they're clearly trying hard to look menacing.

Letia hides until she can move silently behind a PC (preferably a spellcaster) and attempt to backstab.

Letia Morningclaw, human female T3/T6/T9: AC 5/4/2; MV 12; hp 13/24/35; THAC0 19/16/14; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA backstab, thief abilities; Str 12, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 15; SZ M; ML 14/16/18; AL NE; XP 120/650/2,000.

At 3rd Level: Leather armor, rapier, belt pouch with five moonstones (50 gp each). Thief skills: PP 30%, OL 35%, F/RT 20%, MS 50%, HS 50%, DN 20%, CW 60%, RL 0%.

At 6th-level: *Leather armor +1, rapier +2,* potion of *healing*, belt pouch with five pearls (250 gp each). Thief skills: PP 35%, OL 40%, F/RT 25%, MS 60%, HS 60%, DN 50%, CW 85%, RL 0%.

At 9th-level: *Leather armor +3, rapier of quickness, ring of blinking*, potion of *extra-healing*, belt pouch with five opals (1,000 gp each). Thief skills: PP 45%, OL 50%, F/RT 35%, MS 70%, HS 70%, DN 60%, CW 95%, RL 20%.

Thugs, human males F1 (2) for levels 1–3: AC 7; MV 9; hp 6, 9; THAC0 19; #AT 3/2; Dmg 2d4+2 (specialization); Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 6; SZ M; ML 12; AL LE; XP 35; studded leather armor, morningstar, throwing knives.

Thugs, human males F3 (2) for levels 4–6: AC 6; MV 9; hp 20, 22; THAC0 16; #AT 3/2; Dmg 2d4+3 (Strength, specialization); Str 17 (+1/+1), Dex 12, Con 15, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 6; SZ M; ML 14; AL LE; XP 120; brigandine armor, morningstar, throwing daggers.

Thugs, human males F5 (2) for levels 7–9: AC 5; MV 6; hp 34, 44; THAC0 14; #AT 3/2; Dmg 2d4+4 (Strength, specialization); Str 18 (+1/+2), Dex 12, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 6; SZ M; ML 16; AL LE; XP 270; chainmail, morningstar, throwing axe.

If the PCs attempt to make conversation with Letia or her thugs before this encounter occurs, they find these "monks" singularly unresponsive. While the thugs remain totally silent, Letia answers or evades any questions as briefly as possible while attempting to maintain the appearance of religious pilgrims with no knowledge of combat or the supernatural. Letia is sleeping in area **F6**, while her cohorts share area **F7**.

The gemstones in Letia's pouch—her payment from Aristeos—are the primary financial reward to the PCs for completing the adventure.

A portal opens, unleashing the Darkness that destroyed Fey-Aryth.

Although called into existence by a simple illusion (*improved phantasmal force* if Aristeos is 4th level, *spectral force* if he is 7th level, or *advanced illusion* if he is 10th level), the figments in this area instantly shed the illusion and take their own indistinct forms, seeking to spread as much terror and pain as possible. Aristeos, meanwhile, hides in the closet (using his *robe of blending* or *ring of invisibility*) and relies on the ensuing chaos to make his escape. If the PCs trap him here, proceed with the climactic encounter, "Dark Portal." The PCs must deal with the figments at the same time as the shadowy menace of that encounter.

Three figments attack each PC in the hallway, while the remainder spread throughout the second floor of the inn in search of additional victims. On the second round, the PCs hear incoherent screaming from area **F4**. The other rooms on the second floor are vacant, but the figments fly up and down the hallways and in and out of rooms. The battle should take the PCs all over the second floor. (The ghostly encounter in area **F8**, **F9**, or **F10** does not occur at this time.)

For levels 1–3: **Figments** (24): AC 6; MV fly 15 (A); HD ½; hp 2 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d2; SZ S (2' long); ML 14; Int semi (2); AL CE; XP 15; New monster.

For levels 4–6: **Figments** (24): AC 4; MV fly 15 (A); HD 1+1; hp 6 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1; SD silver or magic weapons to hit; MR 10%; SZ S (2' long); ML 14; Int semi (3); AL CE; XP 175; New monster.

For levels 7–9: **Figments** (24): AC 2; MV Fl 15 (A); HD 2; hp 11 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4; SA drain one level; SD +2 or better weapons to hit; MR 25%; SZ S (2' long); ML 14; Int semi (4); AL CE; XP 650; New monster.

Although nothing sinister lurks in the other closets and storage areas in the inn, never let the PCs know that just from your description. Select one of the following brief descriptions each time the PCs open any other closet or explore a storage area:

> Light stabs into the dark closet, and motes of dust swirl in the beams. The shadows seem to stir as well, as if awakened from a long, deep sleep.

> A jumble of boxes, broomsticks, pails, pillows, and crates fills this area. An extensive spider web occupies one corner of the ceiling, but the spider is nowhere in sight.

> The door to this closet creaks loudly as you pull it open, and a shelf inside seems to groan in response.

> The darkness in this closet seems to rebuff your light, and even you feel its weight dragging at you, as if you were underwater. Otherwise, it seems to be a perfectly normal storage area.

If the PCs start spending too much time ransacking closets, ease off on the descriptions. They should keep the players guessing without sidetracking the adventure.

Dark Portal

This encounter occurs whenever the PCs confront Aristeos—whether by trapping him in an upstairs room (see the encounters in areas **F8**, **F9**, **F10**, and **K**) or by overcoming all the other encounters. By this time, Aristeos at 4th level might be exhausted of spells and an apparently helpless opponent, but at higher levels he still has an assortment of useful combat spells at his disposal. Regardless, the figments have taken a liking to this weaver of illusion and come to his aid … as does something darker.

The text below assumes that the encounter occurs in the taproom (area **A**), bringing the adventure to a close where it began. If not, omit the first three sentences and replace the doorway with a window in the description:

> Dark shadows leap and dance around the room, as if the fireplace were casting darkness instead of light. Without warning, the outside doors burst open with a howl of wind that extinguishes candles and torches nearby. Empty chairs are toppled by its force, while glasses and bottles shatter on the ground behind the bar. You see two dark shapes forming in the doorway, as if the wind were collecting scraps of darkness and assembling them into these sinister figures. They stand as tall as a man and wear a vaguely humanoid shape, but their substance is swirling darkness and their faces are featureless.
>
> Behind the creatures, the wind continues to howl and swirl, forming what looks like a shadowy portal into some nether realm. Fluttering pieces of darkness, like tatters of cloth, rush around in a spiraling oval, broken by arcs of dark lightning. Vague images flicker at the perimeter of the

Darknesses

The creatures that emerge from the portal are lesser manifestations of the seething Darkness that swallowed the ancient elven city of Fey-Aryth, whose ruins lie beneath the Sleeping Dragon Inn. Completely alien to the Prime Material plane, the darknesses adopt humanoid shapes only in imitation of their opponents. Their thoughts and motivations are beyond human comprehension, though their purposes and actions are clearly malevolent.

The powers of the darknesses depend on the level of the PCs, but they all share certain traits. The darknesses attack by touch, draining hit points from their victims and adding the drained points to their own hit point totals. As with the *vampiric touch* spell, any hit points exceeding the creature's normal maximum are treated as temporary hit points that the creature loses first and that wear off after 1 hour. The number of hit points drained depends on the strength of the creature. The greater darknesses also drain one energy level from their victims with a successful melee attack.

A PC who is struck and drained by a greater darkness experiences a taste of the madness that is their existence. Faint voices echo in her mind; they sound distant, but their torment is plain. The voices fade immediately and have no lasting effect on the character beyond lingering nightmares. If the darknesses kill a character, her voice joins the screaming cacophony. The PC cannot be *raised* or *resurrected* unless his companions first undertake a quest to banish the Darkness from Fey-Aryth and release the mad souls contained within it.

The darknesses also exude an *aura of fear* that affects all opponents within 15 feet. These PCs must make a successful saving throw vs. spell or succumb to the *fear* effect; the results of a failed saving throw depend on the power of the darknesses, as listed below. One a PC makes a successful saving throw against a darkness's *aura of fear*, she is forever immune to the *fear* generated by that particular darkness.

For levels 1–3: **Lesser darknesses** (2): AC 5; MV 15; HD 2; hp 8, 11; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4; SA *vampiric touch*; SD *aura of fear* (make a successful saving throw vs. spell or suffer a –1 penalty to attacks, damage, and saving throws); SZ M (6' tall); ML 16; Int very (11–12); AL CE; XP 270; New monster.

For levels 4–6: **Normal darknesses** (2): AC 3; MV 15; HD 5; hp 18, 29; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 5d4; SA *vampiric touch*; SD *aura of fear* (make a successful saving throw vs. spell or suffer a –2 penalty to attacks, damage, and saving throws), silver or magic weapons to hit; MR 10%; SZ M (6' tall); ML 17; Int high (13–14); AL CE; XP 2,000; New monster.

For levels 7–9: **Greater darknesses** (2): AC 1; MV 15; HD 8; hp 34, 40; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 8d4; SA energy drain (one level), *vampiric touch*; SD *aura of fear* (make a successful saving throw vs. spell or flee in terror for 3d4 rounds), +2 or better weapons to hit; MR 25%; SZ M (6' tall); ML 18; Int exceptional (15–16); AL CE; XP 8,000; New monster.

portal, reminding you in fleeting glimpses of the foes you have already defeated this evening—a demon rat appears for an instant here, a ghostly apparition there.

These shadowy forms represent the first, tentative reach toward the surface on the part of the unnamed Darkness that consumed the elven city of Fey-Aryth centuries ago. For low-level characters, it is a half-hearted reach at best, though it might be a sign of worse things to come (gradually increasing in danger and intensity as the PCs advance in levels). Higher-level characters, naturally, face a much more serious threat. See the "Darknesses" sidebar for a description of these creatures.

Throughout the combat, Aristeos uses his remaining spells—if he has any—or his magical *throwing dagger* to fight the PCs as best he can. Every time Aristeos or a PC casts a spell from the Illusion/Phantasm school, the PCs can see the dark portal grow about 1 foot wider. A PC foolish enough to jump through the portal is lost forever (or perhaps not; see "Concluding the Adventure" below). The portal vanishes when the PCs defeat both shadowy monsters.

Concluding the Adventure

Give the PCs a story award equal to Aristeos's XP value in addition to the XP for defeating him, if applicable, for successfully completing the adventure. Gib makes good on his promise of free room and board and promises the PCs free lodging any time they stop in the inn. Although they are not present, Chane and Garron will hear of the PCs' exploits and owe them a debt of gratitude as well—they could be useful allies in an ongoing campaign.

In the end, rather than destroying his enemies' reputation, Aristeos has destroyed his own—and helped another set of heroes to supplant him in popular affection. The PCs have accomplished much, but there is work yet to be done, should they want to pursue it:

- If one or more PCs jumped through the portal behind the darknesses in the climactic encounter, you might wish to allow the remaining PCs to go on a quest to recover them (or at least their remains). At your option, the portal could lead to another plane of existence (the Demiplane of Shadow, the Negative Material plane, or somewhere else entirely), or it could lead deep into the ruins of Fey-Aryth.
- Whether any PCs are stranded there or not, Fey-Aryth remains an intriguing possibility for further exploration. The elven city has been in ruins for centuries, and most of its treasures might have already been looted by robbers or scholars. On the other hand, it could have lain undiscovered all this time, its treasures—and dangers—undiminished by the passage of time.
- The portal itself remains something of a mystery at the conclusion of the adventure. The PCs might wish to investigate what caused Aristeos's spells to create or summon the figments, exploring the connection to Fey-Aryth and its all-consuming Darkness. Ω

Using the Poster Map

This adventure includes a fold-out poster map of the Sleeping Dragon Inn. If you plan to use this map with the adventure, you will also need miniatures or paper cut-outs representing the player characters, the various NPCs (Aristeos, Letia, and the two thugs in particular), and the darknesses.

In addition to showing the layout and contents of the inn, the poster map enables you to better stage encounters with NPCs and monsters. The map also provides players with a more visual and precise tactical representation of each battle.

The poster map is meant to be reusable and can represent any inn visited by the PCs—not just the Sleeping Dragon Inn.

An adventurer fights her way out of a sticky situation.

ASHTAR'S TEMPLE

BY DEANNA FERGUSON

Brutish bandits and ghostly guardians

Artwork by David Day
Cartography by Diesel

DeAnna lives with her husband, James Costello, and daughter, Caitlin, in Atlanta. This is her first appearance in DUNGEON® Adventures, *though she has been gaming since 1984. DeAnna writes: "As soon as Caitlin's old enough not to eat the dice, we plan to introduce her to the D&D® game."*

"Ashtar's Temple" is an AD&D® adventure for 3–6 good-aligned, 1st-level PCs (about 5 total levels). A ranger, while not necessary, would be an asset. The adventure assumes that the PCs hail from the village of Ashtar, located near a ruined temple, but the scenario can be modified easily for PCs "just passing through."

The temple can be located almost anywhere near a river or other source of water. The DM can substitute any healing deity for Ashtar. Examples include Mishakal in the DRAGONLANCE® setting, Pelor or Zodal in the GREYHAWK® setting, and Ilmater or Lathander in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting.

DMs will find the *Van Richten's Guide to Ghosts* accessory and *The Complete Book to Humanoids* useful, but they are not required to run the scenario.

Adventure Background

Two hundred years ago, priests of Ashtar, goddess of healing, arrived at a popular rest-stop for travelers. An enterprising farmer had opened an inn, and the priests decided that this would make a good location for a temple. With the aid of the local farmers, they cleared out trees and drove off the few monsters that had settled in the chosen spot.

Soon travelers began visiting the temple regularly, and the priests developed a loyal following. The village, named Ashtartown, grew and prospered along with the temple. Not surprisingly, such prosperity garnered the attention of local bandit gangs, and the townspeople and the priests banded together to fight off several loosely organized attacks.

One hundred years ago, a large and highly trained bandit force overran the temple, killing and looting. Before they caused too much damage, the baron sent a small army to end the destruction. Although the temple was ruined, the town was saved.

With all the priests dead, there was no one left to rebuild the temple. The townspeople made a halfhearted effort to fix the temple, but something scared them off. As time passed, one exaggerated story led to another until everyone in the village believed the temple was haunted by hordes of undead priests.

The main temple of Ashtar, under political pressure elsewhere, decided to abandon the site. Recently, however, they have regained much of their former glory and have sent a priest named Guerin to reclaim the temple.

For the Players

Two days after bandits reclaim the abandoned temple as a base for looting, Guerin arrives to cleanse it. When he learns about the bandits, he pales and immediately seeks out adventurers to aid him. A few locals point him in the direction of the PCs:

> You are greeted by Guerin, a priest of the healing goddess Ashtar. An overweight man, he sweats in the summer heat as he stands outside the small house you have rented. When you invite him in, the chair he picks groans under his weight.
>
> "Thank you," he pants. "My superiors have sent me to reclaim the abandoned temple that lies several miles southeast of here. Our priesthood would like to see it rebuilt. However, they did not expect me to face an organized team of bandits! The townspeople tell me that you are looking for adventure, and I certainly could use your help."

Guerin has not been authorized by the main temple to hire adventurers, but he knows he cannot complete his mission on his own. He has four gems worth 500 gp each hidden in his room at the inn, and he is willing to give them to the PCs as an incentive. He also expects that they could claim any treasure that is not obviously a relic of Ashtar's.

If the PCs bring up the notion that the temple is haunted, Guerin waves his hand and dismisses such rumors as mere fantasizing.

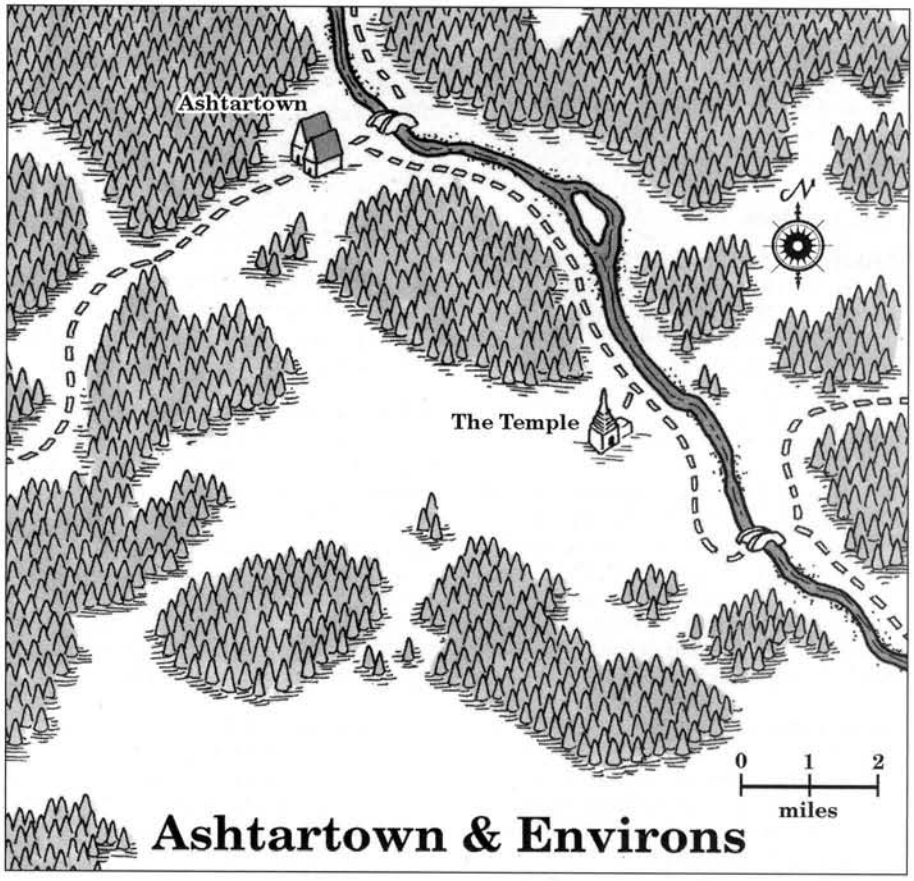
If the PCs ask him if he has any knowledge of the bandits (who they are, how many of them), he pales again. "I didn't dare go near the temple," he says. He has heard rumors that the bandits are well-organized and have taken refuge in the temple after raiding a merchant caravan.

Once the PCs have accepted the task, they can determine how best to approach the temple. If the PCs are from this area, they should have some knowledge of how the temple is laid out, but not any of the changes that the bandits have wrought in the days they have been there.

Guerin, human male C5: AC 5; MV 9; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+2 (*warhammer +1*); Str 12, Dex 9, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 15, Cha 12; ML 15; AL NG; scalemail, medium shield, *warhammer +1, staff of curing* (15 charges), pouch containing four 500-gp gems.

Spells memorized (5/4/1): 1st—*cure light wounds* (×2), *light, protection from evil, remove fear*; 2nd—*cure moderate wounds* (×2), *hold person, restore strength*; 3rd—*cure disease.*

Cure moderate wounds and *restore strength* are detailed in the *Player's Option®: Spells & Magic* book; the DM should substitute other appropriate spells if this book is unavailable.



Priests of Ashtar are not skilled fighters; they receive little training in the art of battle. The priests at the main temple dug up Guerin's armor, shield, and warhammer from a back closet.

Guerin is an overweight man, obviously unaccustomed to wearing armor. He has been given the task of clearing the temple by his superiors, though he would prefer to remain in Ashtartown and let experienced adventurers handle the task. He gladly provides healing to any injured party members.

Ashtar's Temple

Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs approach the temple:

> The temple appears quite dilapidated. Cracks have appeared in the foundation of the temple itself, and portions of the walls have crumbled, leaving gaping holes. Set into the north face of the main building are two painted wooden doors that hang on rusty hinges.

Ashtar's Temple is, in fact, haunted. When the original bandits invaded one hundred years ago, Tralisa, the captain of the temple guards, was unable to fulfill her oath to protect the temple, and so her spirit remained as a ghost. She kept the original bandits from raiding the treasury and has been successful in keeping other bandits from using the temple as a base of operations. However, she believes that the rumors of a ghost haunting the temple have kept the priests from reclaiming it. She knows that if the temple is reclaimed, she will no longer need to guard the temple. With that in mind, she has allowed the current bandits (a band of orcs) to remain in the temple complex, although she has not allowed them to explore the lower level.

The current bandits, calling themselves Maksym's Mercenaries, are a well-organized group led by a brutal half-orc fighter named Maksym, who has enough intelligence to anticipate an attack from the village. Maksym has led the orcs on a number of successful raids, oftentimes at the forefront of the attack, and his orcs are loyal. (Statistics for the orcs are provided in the sidebar on the next page.)

Unless otherwise noted, doors in the temple hang loosely on their hinges and squeal loudly when opened. Rooms are unlit unless otherwise noted.

Maksym's Mercenaries

Maksym's Mercenaries consist of Maksym, Buciac (his second-in-command), Dekthok (the orc witch doctor), ten male orcs, and four female orcs. They are detailed below.

The Leaders

Maksym, half-orc male F3: AC 4; MV 12; hp 31; THAC0 18 (base); #AT 3/2 (with bastard sword) or 1; Dmg by weapon type +2 (specialization bonus), +3 (Strength bonus); SD see below; Str 18/28 (+1/+3), Dex 11, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 9, Cha 12; ML 12; AL LE; XP 120; hide armor, helmet, *small shield +1*, bastard sword, pouch containing four gems (worth 50 gp each).

Maksym wears an impressive horned helm with an iron visor that not only conceals his eyes and cheekbones but also hides most of his obviously orcish features. He stands 6'5" tall, with a frame that is muscular yet lithe. He likes to strap his shield to one arm and wield his bastard sword with both hands. Maksym has the Blind-fighting NWP.

Buciac, half-orc male F1/T1: AC 7; MV 12; hp 5; THAC0 20 (base); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+2 (short sword); SD see below; Str 16 (+0/+1), Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 6; ML 12; AL LE; XP 35; leather armor, small shield, short sword, pouch containing 28 gp.

Thief abilities: PP 25%, OL 30%, F/RT 25%, MS 15%, HS 10%, DN 25%, CW 90%, RL –10%.

For a squat, overweight half-orc, Buciac is surprisingly nimble. He has the Close-quarter Fighting NWP, giving him a +2 bonus to attack rolls when using a piercing or bludgeoning weapon.

Dekthok, orc male W4 (witch doctor): AC 10; MV 12; hp 11; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); Str 10, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 7, Cha 8; ML 12; AL LE; XP 65; *MM*/281; spellbook, dagger, pouch containing 30 gp.

Spells (2): 1st—*magic missile, shield*.

Witch doctors are limited to one school of magic (in Dekthok's case, Invocation/Evocation), and they have none of the bonuses or penalties of specialist wizards. Witch doctors cast spells as wizards half their level (rounded up).

Dekthok wears a wooden demon mask that gives him a fearsome, otherworldly appearance.

The remaining members of Maksym's band share the same basic statistics:

Orcs: AC varies; MV 12; HD 1; hp varies; THAC0 19; #AT 2 (ranged weapon) or 1 (melee weapon); Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 12; AL LE; XP 35; *MM*/281; see below for ability scores and equipment.

First Watch (8:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.)

Fredek (male orc): AC 6; hp 3; Str 16 (+0/+1), Dex 11, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 7; studded leather armor, shield, battle-ax, shortbow, 10 flight arrows, pouch containing 7 gp.

Hudak (male orc): AC 5; hp 8; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 8, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 4; hide armor, medium shield, battle-ax, shortbow, 10 flight arrows, pouch containing 14 gp and 35 sp.

Peeterk (male orc): AC 6; hp 4; Str 11, Dex 8, Con 8, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 11; hide armor, large shield, battle-ax, shortbow, 10 flight arrows, pouch containing 10 gp.

Peeterk has hidden his cowardice well in the past by staying out of melee and firing arrows. When he is forced to engage in hand-to-hand combat with the PCs, the DM should make a Morale check. If it fails, Peeterk acts on Maksym's strategic retreat plan, heading out the back of the temple to safety.

Capeka (female orc): AC 8; hp 4; SA see below; Str 9, Dex 14, Con 9, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 9; leather armor, medium shield, shortbow, 10 flight arrows, pouch containing 8 sp.

Capeka has the Close-quarter Fighting NWP, which gives her a +2 bonus on her attack rolls when using bludgeoning or piercing weapons.

Jukth (male orc): AC 7; hp 4; Str 10, Dex 9, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 6; leather armor, battle-ax, shortbow, 10 flight arrows, pouch containing 5 gp and 16 sp.

Second Watch (4:00 P.M. – 12:00 A.M.)

Vasek (male orc): AC 8; hp 3; Str 17 (+1/+1), Dex 11, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 14, Cha 4; leather armor, shortbow, 10 flight arrows, battle-ax, pouch containing 15 gp.

Rostis (male orc): AC 8; hp 5; Str 11, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 8, Cha 8; leather armor, shortbow, 10 flight arrows, halberd, pouch containing 2 gp.

Rostis is double-jointed. If captured, he can twist free of his bonds with a successful Dexterity check. Such an escape requires 1d6 rounds for each limb that is bound.

Nelek (male orc): AC 6; hp 8; Str 13, Dex 9, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 3; hide armor, shortbow, 10 flight arrows, battle-ax, pouch containing 15 gp.

Nelek is a deep sleeper. If the PCs approach before noon, he takes 1d6 rounds to wake up before he picks up his weapons and joins the fight.

Greguska (female orc): AC 8; hp 3; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 15, Cha 11; leather armor, shortbow, 10 flight arrows, halberd, pouch containing 6 gp.

Greguska has the Healing proficiency. A successful proficiency check means she has restored 1d3 hit points. (She must roll a 7 or less on 1d20.) Whether or not the check succeeds, her bandaging brings restores an orc at negative hit points to 0 hit points and unconsciousness.

Otka (female orc): AC 8; hp 2; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 9, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 11; leather armor, shortbow, 10 flight arrows, battle-ax, halberd, pouch containing 15 gp.

Otka fears magic. When Dekthok or a PC casts a spell, she must make a Morale check or run from the temple, using Maksym's plans for a strategic retreat.

Third Watch (12:00 A.M. – 8:00 A.M.)

Alzbet (female orc): AC 7; hp 3; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 8; ring mail, shortbow, 10 flight arrows, battle-ax, pouch containing 9 gp and 34 sp.

Alzbet possesses the Wild Fighting NWP, which requires a successful proficiency check (12 or less on 1d20) at the start of combat. Failure means that she receives only the penalties (–3 to THAC0, +3 to AC) and none of the benefits (two attacks per round and a +3 bonus to damage). See *The Complete Book of Humanoids* for more information.

Krejci (male orc): AC 7; hp 8; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 7; studded leather armor, shortbow, 10 flight arrows, battle-ax, pouch containing 20 gp.

Loj (male orc): AC 7; hp 3; Str 16 (+0/+1), Dex 9, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 9; leather armor, shield, spear, shortbow, 10 flight arrows, pouch containing 5 gp.

Loj has a tremendous fear of dragons, having been frightened by one flying overhead when he was a young orc.

Zytka (female orc): AC 7; hp 4; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 13, Cha 5; spiked leather armor, shortbow, 10 flight arrows, halberd, pouch containing 32 sp.

Tomik (male orc): AC 7; hp 5; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 7; leather armor, shield, shortbow, 10 flight arrows, battle-ax.

Tomik only recently joined Maksym's Mercenaries and has not gained any monetary rewards.

Orc Tactics

The orcs have split the day into three duty watches, each led by one of the leaders. Dekthok leads the first watch, Maksym leads the second watch, and Buciac commands the third watch. The DM should have a rough idea what time the PCs approach the temple to determine which orcs are awake, sleeping, or reviewing their next raid. (Maksym only allows one-third of his forces to sleep at any given time. The other off-duty orcs help the half-orc plan out the next raid.)

The asterisks on the map indicate the positions of the orcs on watch; the leaders and off-duty orcs are gathered in area **2**.

It takes 1 round for off-duty but awake orcs to respond to an alarm; it takes 3 rounds for the sleeping orcs to gather their weapons and prepare for battle.

Orcs suffer a –1 penalty to their attack rolls and morale when fighting in direct sunlight; thus the orcs seldom venture outside the temple's shadowy confines.

Orcs hidden behind cracks in the temple walls have 75% cover and receive a –7 bonus to their AC. However, remember that dwarven PCs receive a +1 bonus to their attack rolls when fighting orcs.

Through the cracks in the walls, the orcs spot any party making its way toward the temple unless the PCs take great strides to conceal their approach. This requires ingenuity, such as a wizard casting a *wall of fog* spell to reduce visibility around the temple, or stealth, such as a thief using her Move Silently and Hide in Shadows abilities. If the PCs are spotted approaching from the front, the orcs in area **1** release the war dog from its chains and sound the alarm. If the PCs are spotted approaching from any other angle, the orc who spots them sounds the alarm; the war dog is released the following round.

War dog: AC 6; MV 12; HD 2+2; hp 5 (10 at full); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4; SZ M; ML 9; Int semi (3); AL N; XP 65 (double if the PCs coax the dog to their side); *MM*/57.

Any ranger or PC with the Animal Handling proficiency has one chance to distract the dog from attacking by tossing a bit of meat to the side. The dog is not well trained and has not eaten recently. If the Animal Handling check succeeds, the dog passes them to round up the treat; if it fails, the dog attacks. If the PC makes another Animal Handling check, the dog does not attack and could become a companion for that PC, if the DM chooses. If the PC fails the check, the dog attacks the next round. Meanwhile, orc archers begin shooting arrows at the PCs.

When the PCs enter the main building, at least two orc archers fall back to a safe distance and continue to shoot arrows at the PCs while the remaining orcs engage in melee. (The orc archers suffer a –4 penalty to their attack rolls when firing into melee combat. This negates the chance of them accidentally wounding their fellow orcs.)

The remaining orcs band together in the center of the main sanctuary (area **2**). Dekthok casts his *shield* spell as soon as the alarm rings; the following round, he casts his *magic missile* at the toughest PC he sees. After that, he follows the escape plan Maksym has designed (see below).

Although the orcs' tactics are simple, they are effective. The orcs attempt to gang up on any obvious fighters to negate any Dexterity bonuses to Armor Classes. They attack for 1 round and then fall back so that the next wave of orcs can engage. Any injured orc drops out of the waves, and another orc takes its place.

If it looks like the PCs are winning, the wave of orcs that just disengaged begins a strategic retreat, and the current wave continues battling until the first wave has retreated through the cracks in the back of the temple. Maksym is no fool; although the temple makes a great staging ground, he and his band move on to find easier pickings.

If enough orcs survive the PCs' assault, they hide out in the forest surrounding the temple and wait for any PCs to emerge from the underground level. They conduct a quick hit-and-run ambush to grab as much treasure as they can before moving on to their next raid.

If the orcs manage to drive off the PCs without suffering any significant losses, Maksym remains at the temple but keeps two watches on duty at all times. If the orcs lose the equivalent of an entire watch in the altercation, Maksym gathers his remaining troops and withdraws from the temple.

If the orcs successfully capture one or more PCs, Maksym has them stripped of clothing and equipment, bound with rope, and gagged. The prisoners are placed atop the dais in the main sanctuary (area **2**) and watched closely.

If the surviving PCs try to negotiate for their comrades' release, Maksym instructs Buciac or another subordinate to present his demands. Maksym will agree to release his prisoners for 250 gp per head. If the PCs approach Guerin for assistance, the priest agrees to give them one or two of his gems to secure the safe release of the prisoners; this amount is then deducted from the party's reward. Once the orcs receive the payment, they release the prisoners, wait until the PCs leave, and then leave the temple. Maksym doesn't want vengeful PCs returning to trouble him in the future.

Main Temple (Areas 1–3)

1. Temple Foyer. The orcs have dug a pit trap in front of the temple doors and covered it with a woven grass mat that almost exactly matches the rest of the yard. A thief searching the area in front of the doors receives a +10% bonus to her Find Traps roll. The pit itself is about 7 feet deep. The orcs can't see into the pit to fire arrows, although PCs pulling themselves out become easy targets (no Dexterity bonus to Armor Class).

The first PC charging the temple doors (if not checking for traps) must make a Dexterity check with a –4 penalty to avoid the pit trap. Any PCs following can avoid the trap by making a successful, unmodified Dexterity check.

If the Dexterity check fails, the PC falls into the pit, suffering 1–3 points of damage. If the roll fails by 5 or more, the PC sprains an ankle, resulting in a 50% reduction in movement rate until the damage is healed.

The asterisks on the map indicate the positions of three orc sentries. During the first watch, Fredek, Hudak, and Peeterk are here; during the second watch, Vasek, Rostis, and Nelek are here; during the third watch, Alzbet, Krejci, and Loj are here.

A war dog is chained to a small block of stone in the middle of the room; the orcs release the dog once intruders are detected, as outlined in the "Orc Tactics" sidebar.

Apart from the orcs and the war dog, the foyer contains nothing of interest. Everything of value was taken from here years ago.

2. Main Sanctuary. The asterisks on the map indicate the positions of two orc sentries. During the first watch, Capeka and Jukth are here; during the second watch, Greguska and Otka are here; during the third watch, Zitka and Tomik are here. The leaders and off-duty orcs are either sleeping in bedrolls spaced evenly along the walls or huddled in the middle of the room, planning their next raid.

Holes in the roof allow light to enter this chamber. Benches reduced to kindling litter the floor. On cold nights, the orcs use this kindling for fires. Scorch marks, soot, charred wood, and animal bones litter the floor.

If the PCs capture any orcs, they can question them about the layout of the temple. Only Maksym, Buciac, and Vasek explored the lower level and saw the ghost, so unless one of them is captured, none of the others can describe exactly what it was that kept the leaders out of the lower level. They can tell the PCs, however, that something scared the Nine Hells out of their leader, who returned from a quick exploration of the lower level white as a sheet. Maksym then instructed the orcs not to explore the lower levels, and they agreed, frightened by whatever could have scared their vaunted leader.

3. Preparation Room. Maksym has taken this room as his office. He has blockaded the stairs leading down with a heavy armoire he found in this room (once used to store the priests' vestments before ceremonies). The remainder of his treasure can be found hidden in his bedroll: 75 gp, 1 pp, and four gems worth 100 gp, 50 gp, and 10 gp (×2) respectively.

One of the gold coins hidden in Maksym's bedroll is a lock lurker. It looks so much like a coin that an unsuspecting PC might pick it up without realizing what it is. Maksym has carried it around for about a week—part of the raid the orcs just completed. Because the lurker hasn't eaten in a week, it attacks the character who picks it up.

A lurker's teeth can bite through hide, hair, skin, or leather armor, but not metal. Its bite causes 1 point of damage. A lurker's stinger strikes as if the creature were a much more powerful monster. The stinger can attack creatures in the Ethereal plane and materializes on the Prime Material plane only when the lurker launches an attack. The strike is powerful enough to pierce any armor and to stun opponents of Medium size or smaller for 1d2 rounds. It causes 1d4+5 points of damage and injects a venom that *slows* a victim (as per the wizard spell) on the round following the sting's strike. During that round, the victim's body reacts to the poison. She must make a saving throw vs. poison or be immediately paralyzed for 1d6 hours. The victim is then *slowed* for 1d2 rounds, but then recovers. If the saving throw is successful, the victim is *slowed* for a second round, but then recovers fully.

Lock lurker: AC 3; MV 8; HD 1+3; hp 6; THAC0 17 (sting) or 19 (bite); #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+5 (sting) or 1 (bite); SA paralyzing venom; SD partial etherealness; SZ T; ML 13; Int low (5); AL N; XP 175; *MCA1*.

The Hospital (Areas 4–7)

In all of the rooms except for areas **5** and **7**, the roof has caved in.

4. Healer's Quarters. This plain room contains some shredded cloth and broken wood—the remains of beds that now serve as nests for the creatures that live here.

Twelve webbirds have taken up residence in this room, sharing the hospital with the stirges in area **6**. During the day, the webbirds are alert and attack intruders on sight, waking the stirges. At night, the stirges provide the same service for the webbirds. During dawn and dusk, both groups tend to be active and attack together. Such combination attacks can be lethal.

Webbirds fear fire and do not attack anyone carrying an open flame such as a torch. The webbirds also refuse to approach large blazes such as bonfires.

When attacking, a webbird emits a strand of webbing from its tail. This sticky strand, 1d6+6 feet long, is extremely strong and capable of immobilizing even human-sized creatures. When a flock of these creatures attacks with their webbing, each victim must make a successful saving throw vs. paralyzation or become entangled and immobilized. For every three webbirds attacking an individual, that victim's saving throw is reduced by one.

Entrapment lasts 1d4+4 rounds, though a PC with a 18 Strength or better can break free in 1 round. A webbird's webs are immune to fire, but wine (or any other alcoholic liquid) dissolves the material in 1 round. A standard wineskin holds enough wine to free one Medium-sized creature or two Small-sized creatures. Entrapped creatures cannot attack or cast spells, and they lose all Dexterity bonuses to Armor Class.

After the webbirds have immobilized a victim, 1d3 of the creatures land and begin nibbling on the victim, each causing 1 hit point of damage per round. In addition, one webbird lands and inserts its hooklike appendage into any exposed flesh on the victim, injecting 2d4 eggs. This causes no damage to the victim, but in 1d4+2 turns the eggs hatch, becoming grubs that immediately begin feeding. Each grub causes 1 hit point of damage per round, eventually killing the host. The excruciating pain resulting from the feeding process prevents the victim from taking any action, including attacking, defending, or using spells or psionics.

Within 7 turns after the victim's death, fledgling webbirds (with the same statistics as adults) emerge from the carcass. A *cure disease* spell kills the grubs, as does burning the body before the fledglings emerge.

Webbirds (12): AC 8; MV 3, fly 18 (B); HD ¼; hp 1 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA webs, egg insertion; SZ S; ML 6; Int semi (2); AL N; XP 65; *MCA2*/113.

5. Bathing Chamber.

> The floor of this room is covered with cracked, white ceramic tiles. A sunken area in the center of the room holds brackish water, but the rain spout leading to the pool is still in good shape. A large black cauldron, in excellent shape, rests in the soot-stained fireplace.

The cauldron radiates Alteration magic when a *detect magic* spell is cast. It is a *cauldron of heating*. This large item holds up to 20 gallons. Upon command, the *cauldron* heats the liquid to near-boiling temperature, requiring 1 turn to do so. The heated liquid inflicts 2d6 points of heat damage to any creature immersed in it. The *cauldron* can be sold for up to 500 gp to an interested buyer.

6. Sickrooms.

> Once cheerful colors decorate the walls of this room. A smashed bedframe and rotting sheets are all that remain of the bed. Parts of the roof have caved in here, and twigs and leaves have settled in the bed.

Sixteen stirges have claimed these sickrooms as nesting places, two stirges per room. As stirges are night creatures, they are asleep during the day. However, after the first room is opened, all other stirges will be awake and ready for visitors. If the PCs visit the webbirds first (area **4**), all the stirges are awake.

The stirges have recently moved into the temple complex. They chose the hospital as their base due to the holes in the roof. If the PCs flee the area, the stirges do not follow.

Stirges (2 per room, 16 total): AC 8; MV 3, fly 18 (C); HD 1+1; hp 5 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3; SA blood drain; SZ S; ML 8; Int animal (1); AL N; XP 175; *MM*/332.

7. Surgery Room.

> This room is illuminated by a glowing glass ball affixed to the ceiling. Two overturned metal tables lie next to one wall, and scalpels and knives lay scattered around the room. Shelves on the south wall hold jars of some sort, although most of them look empty.

Unlike other areas of the hospital, the ceiling of this room is mostly intact. The room is kept relatively clean by a *permanent cantrip* spell. The shelves once contained potions of *healing*, but no longer. Only empty jars and impotent elixirs remain.

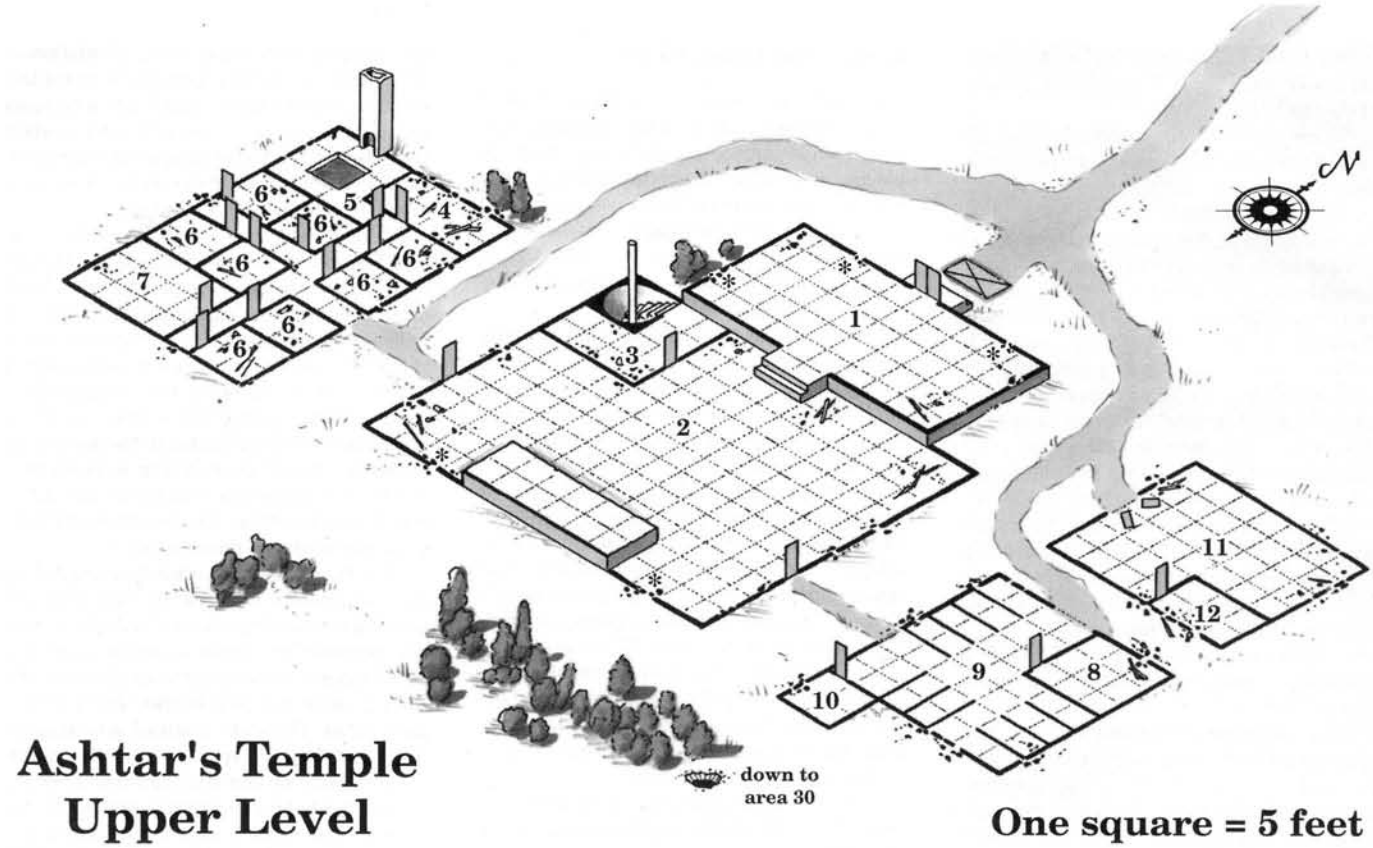
If the PCs have a means to reach the ceiling, they could detach the *continual light* ball from the ceiling (it is merely screwed into a plate) and carry it with them. However, the ball (about the size of a cantaloupe) is made of glass. If the PCs are not careful as they take it down, it drops and shatters, ending the spell.

The Stables (Areas 8–10)

8. Groom's Quarters.

> Not much remains in what you assume were the groom's quarters. A foul stench fills the room, and eight monstrous rodents have made crude nests within.

Eight giant rats have made this section of the stables their home. They haven't eaten in a while and are quite hungry. The rats have avoided the orcs' horses, fearing their sharp hooves. A space behind some moldy straw is just large enough for the rats to squeeze outside to get their fresh water.



Giant rats (8): AC 7; MV 12, swim 6; HD ½; hp 2 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3; SA disease; SZ T; ML 5; Int semi (2); AL NE; XP 15; *MM*/300.

9. Stables.

> Three ill-kept horses stamp their hooves nervously in these dark and gloomy stables.

The orc bandits captured these horses during previous raids. The horses are nervous because of the giant rats dwelling nearby and seem eager to leave the stables.

The DM should feel free to modify the number of horses appearing to suit the needs of the party. The horses have not been fed in several days and look malnourished. A ranger or PC with the Animal Handling proficiency has the best chance of befriending them.

At the DM's discretion, the horses might belong to a wealthy noble who will pay 100 gp for the safe return of each steed. PCs who claim the horses as their own might draw attention to themselves, and the horses' true owner could have them arrested for theft!

Light war horses (3): AC 7; MV 24; HD 2; hp 6, 6, 3 (weakened by hunger); THAC0 19; #AT 2; Dmg 1d4/1d4; SZ L; ML 6; Int animal (1); AL N; XP 35; *MM*/194.

10. Tack Room. This small room contains saddles for the three horses in the stables. The saddles could be in excellent or horrible condition, at the DM's discretion.

A pseudodragon has chosen this room as its temporary home while it investigates the orcs. Its true lair lies in the forest close to the temple, and it became curious when it heard the racket the orcs were making.

When it hears the door creaking open, the pseudodragon hides in a corner behind the racks where the saddles are stored. It blends into the floor so well that a PC has only a 20% chance of detecting it.

If the PCs do not detect it, the pseudodragon chooses one of the PCs to stalk (preferably a wizard) and monitors that character's thoughts. If it determines the character to be good (and the DM so wishes), it presents itself as a traveling companion. If it does not receive a good reaction, it flies away.

The pseudodragon did not bring any of its treasure with it and, being a selfish creature, is not inclined to share.

Pseudodragon: AC 2; MV 6, fly 24 (B); HD 2; hp 14; THAC0 19 (15 with stinger); #AT 1; Dmg 1d3; SA poison sting (causes catalepsy for 1d6 days); SD chameleon power, 60' infravision; SZ T; ML 15; Int average (9); AL NG; XP 420; *MM*/91.

The Barracks (Areas 11–12)

11. Common Barracks. Even the devoted healers of Ashtar recognized the need for armed might, and they employed a dozen warriors to provide security.

> Soot darkens the walls of this room, and ash covers the floor where you think bunks might have stood. A small dagger hangs on the north wall, but it looks badly rusted. Holes in the roof allow sunlight to fill the room, and cracks in the floor have enabled many wild plants to grow.

Ivylike plants climb the east wall; these are actually amber lotus flowers. These flowers resemble golden water lilies as large as sunflowers. Their attractive appearance is deceptive, giving no clue as to their true nature.

The amber lotus flowers are sensitive to ground vibrations. When a creature approaches within 10 feet of the plants, their blossoms open, each spraying a cloud of pollen 40 feet in diameter. Any individual within the flower's pollen cloud must make a successful saving throw vs. poison or fall fast asleep for 4d4 turns. Nothing can wake a victim sooner.

The flowers can spray a fresh burst of pollen every 3d4 rounds. Creatures that are

resistant to *sleep* (such as elves, half-elves, and pegataurs) are equally resistant to the pollen of the amber lotus flower.

Sharing the hunting grounds with the amber lotus flowers is a kampfult, lurking next to the amber lotus vines.

The kampfult has a ropelike body with a central core that resembles the decayed stump of a cut-down tree. A kampfult has six attack appendages, each about 6 feet long, and six movement appendages each 1 foot long. These are spaced along the 4'-long, stumplike body. Several creatures can be attacked at the same time. Once hit by an appendage, a victim is wrapped up until either the kampfult is slain or the victim frees himself. (Those with a Strength of 16 or greater can free themselves automatically in 1 round; others must roll a successful Strength check.) Only the central section of the creature needs to be attacked to kill it, but severing its tentacles can succeed in rendering a kampfult harmless. Each tentacle requires 2 points of cutting damage to sever and causes 1 point of constriction damage per round. All portions of a kampfult are considered AC 4.

The kampfult can extend or pull in its appendages to disguise itself, and when doing so it imposes a –3 penalty to its opponents' surprise rolls. The kampfult is carnivorous but prefer to attack small, solitary mammals. However, it attacks larger prey neutralized by the amber lotus flowers.

PCs searching for Tralisa's bones (see area **35**) find them underneath the floor quite close to the kampfult and the flowers. To lay her to rest as she instructs, the PCs must dig up her remains and bury them in a proper ceremony. (After the original bandits attacked the barracks and took out the temple's guards, one of the surviving guards gave Tralisa a quick burial where she had died. Unfortunately, this service wasn't enough to prevent her from returning as a ghost.)

Amber lotus flowers (8): AC 9; MV 0; HD ½; hp 3 each; THAC0 19; #AT 0; Dmg 0; SA sleep pollen (victim must make a successful saving throw vs. poison or fall asleep); SZ T; ML 12; Int non (0); AL N; XP 15; *MC MYSTARA® Appendix*/88.

Kampfult: AC 4; MV 3; HD 2; hp 8; THAC0 19; #AT 6; Dmg 1; SA –3 penalty to opponents' surprise rolls, constriction; SZ S; ML 12; Int low (5); AL NE; XP 175; *MC5*.

12. Captain's Room. This room belonged to Tralisa, the captain of the guard. Not much remains here, partially because the captain was a woman who believed in owning few possessions but also because the bandits did more damage here. Soot marks darken the walls, and ash lingers among the dust. PCs might suspect (and rightly so) that the bandits burned the contents of the room.

Lower Level (Areas 13–35)

Unless otherwise described, walls are made of a grey masonry stone fitted together with grout. Mold grows on the walls in many places, and water drips unceasingly from some unknown source. The doors are made of wood, and many have small holes where mice have chewed through. All the doors have swollen in the humidity and require a successful Open Doors roll to open.

When Ashtar's priests occupied the temple, they kept their apprentices busy cleaning the mold and casting spells to keep the air fresh. Since no one has cast any of those spells in over one hundred years, the entire underground level smells like rotten fruit.

One turn after the PCs descend into the lower level, Tralisa's ghost appears. (See area **35** for statistics.) She begins by decreasing the temperature in the immediate vicinity. One round after the temperature drops, the party's lights flicker, and then she appears, materializing in front of the lead PC as a spectral woman wearing armor. Each PC must make a saving throw vs. spell or flee in terror for 2d6 turns. (Since Tralisa is not a menacing presence, the PCs are not aged and receive a +4 bonus to their saving throws.)

"Stop," she says, holding her hand in front of her. "Why do you invade this sacred temple of Ashtar?"

Because Tralisa is an intelligent ghost, she is aware that the PCs have been clearing out the temple, but she wants to make sure that they have come on a legitimate quest from a priest of Ashtar. Although she has no way to prove what the PCs say, she believes that the threat of her ghostly powers is enough to keep them from lying. If they say something to the effect that they are clearing out the temple under the orders of a priest of Ashtar, Tralisa fades away, saying, "Excellent. Then I will meet you later."

13. Spiral Staircase. This stone staircase leads to area **3** in the temple.

14. Parlor.

> A tattered sofa and three battered chairs are all that remain of this once lavish room. A rug that must have been valuable at one time shreds and comes apart under your feet. Bits and pieces of what look like leather cloaks and gloves lay piled in the middle of the room.

The pieces of cloaks and gloves are actually a common raggamoffyn. This peculiar creature consists of sentient scraps of cloth, leather, and metal. It possesses a host by physically wrapping itself around its target like cloth around a mummy. To enfold a victim, the raggamoffyn must make a successful attack roll against the target's Armor Class counting only Dexterity and magical bonuses (no armor or shield bonuses). If it succeeds, a raggamoffyn's cloud of scraps and tatters covers the victim in a skintight sheath from head to toe, including the eyes and ears.

Once it has covered its host, the raggamoffyn forces the host body to do its bidding. Even when captured, intelligent creatures can throw off the effects by force of will; when enwrapped by a raggamoffyn, a character needs to make a successful saving throw vs. spell to resist the raggamoffyn's control. If the saving throw fails, the PC is under its control but can make another saving throw at the start of each turn to break free. (Each Intelligence point above 15 subtracts 1 round from this time, allowing smarter PCs to make a new saving throw sooner.)

If a PC makes a successful saving throw, the raggamoffyn attempts to asphyxiate the host. This strangling attack is automatic once the raggamoffyn scores a single successful attack against the victim's head (Armor Class 10 without a full face helmet, AC 2 with a great helm, Dexterity bonuses and magical rings and bracers apply). After the raggamoffyn plugs up the nose and mouth of the victim and begins to squeeze the throat, the victim must make a successful Constitution check each round until either the raggamoffyn or the victim is slain. (Spell attacks affect both but serve to remove the rags from the host.) The first check is normal, but thereafter each additional check adds another –2 penalty. If the check fails, the victim dies of suffocation.

Buried underneath the pile of cloaks and gloves (some of which are normal) is the raggamoffyn's treasure: three gems worth 50 gp and 10 gp (×2) respectively.

Raggamoffyn: AC 5; MV 12, fly 8 (E); HD 3; hp 15; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SA suffocation, control host; SD immune to mind-affecting spells; SZ M; ML 11; Int average (9); AL CN; XP 270; *MCA2*/100.

15. Acolyte's Room. This small room contains little more than a bed. A candle holder sits on a small, rickety table next to the bed, and beside the holder is a small incense burner. The incense burner is worth 1 gp to any of Ashtar's followers.

16. Baths. Another sunken area in this room suggests a bathing room for the temple's priests. Nothing remains in the room but some brackish water at the bottom of the pool.

17. Chapel. Nothing here has been despoiled by raids of the temple. A small altar sits in the triangular space to the north, and prayer rugs line the floor. Two *continual light* globes (similar to the one found in area **7**) bathe the altar

in radiant light. The chapel seems to be waiting for its followers to return. The priests of Ashtar had a mage cast a *permanent silence* spell in this room.

If the PCs search the room, they find a scroll with three *cure disease* spells tucked inside a prayer book atop the altar. The room has a mild trap: If the prayer book is taken from the room, the thief is *cursed* (at the 12th level of spellcasting) to speak only truths. (This is similar to the trait compulsive honesty described in the *Player's Option: Skills & Powers* book.) PCs are safe if they take the scroll, but not if they take the prayer book.

18. Rooms for the Dying. The niches to the south once contained small bunks, though not much remains except for some moldy blankets. The rooms to the north were simply storage closets for basic medical supplies. Although most of the items have degraded in the hundred years the temple has been abandoned, the DM should feel free to allow the PCs to find certain common items of healing. For example, although all the herbs have long since disintegrated or become useless, the PCs could find a length of gauze to use as bandages. The PCs can also find some vellum sheets in a sealed scroll tube (used for keeping patient records) if they search for 1 turn.

19. Surgeon Veryl's Room. The inner door is locked. The good-quality lock imposes a –5% penalty to all Open Locks rolls and requires 25 points of damage to break.

This room was where the surgeon spent his time—resting, reading, or praying. The surgeon, a high-level priest, cast *tentacle walls* (see *Tome of Magic*) on his room. The spell activates 1d4 rounds after any creature other than the caster enters the room. The intruder must be larger than a normal rat. When the spell is activated, six black, leathery tentacles sprout inside the room; the *tentacles* are evenly divided among the room's surfaces—one sprouts from the ceiling, one from the floor, and one from each of the four walls.

The whiplike *tentacles* can reach anywhere inside the room. Each round, a *tentacle* has a 30% chance of striking a random creature in the room, inflicting 1d6 points of damage; a successful saving throw vs. spell halves the damage. Each *tentacle* has AC 0 and 25 hit points. When a *tentacle* is reduced to 0 hit points, it disappears in a puff of black smoke.

If all creatures are killed or withdraw from the room, the surviving *tentacles* disappear into the walls. If the spell is activated again, six *tentacles* reappear; new *tentacles* are created to replace any destroyed previously. As long as one *tentacle* survives an encounter, the *tentacles* continue to be replaced. Only when all six *tentacles* are destroyed is the spell permanently negated.

Since none have passed the spell, many of Veryl's possessions have remained undisturbed, including a sharpened knife and some art objects, including a vase worth 100 gp to a collector of religious art. A collector of Ashtar relics might pay double that price.

Other items of interest in this room include a bed in surprisingly good condition, two chairs, and an armoire. Hanging inside the armoire are the surgeon's medical apparel—nondescript brown robes that don't stain easily and hide any bloodstains that don't wash out. However, tucked in the back of the armoire is a small glass tube holding one use of *powder of coagulation*, which, when blown out of the tube, stops bleeding and heals 1d4 hit points of all creatures around the user within a 5' radius.

Hidden under the bed is a wrapped *short sword +1, +3 vs. lycanthropes*; tucked into the wrapping is a *wand of fear* with 3 charges. Against the east wall rests a small altar with another incense burner worth 1 gp to a follower of Ashtar.

20. Well and Latrines.

> The scent of mold is much stronger here, and you soon discover why. With no one to clean it, the well has grown algae. Once pristine chamberpots lie broken and scattered on the floor.

The well drops 20 feet to an underground stream. Two giant frogs lair inside the well, hiding in crevices 5 feet below the well's mouth. If anyone attempts to lower themselves into the well or if anyone drops anything down the well, the frogs attack, one springing out of the well each round.

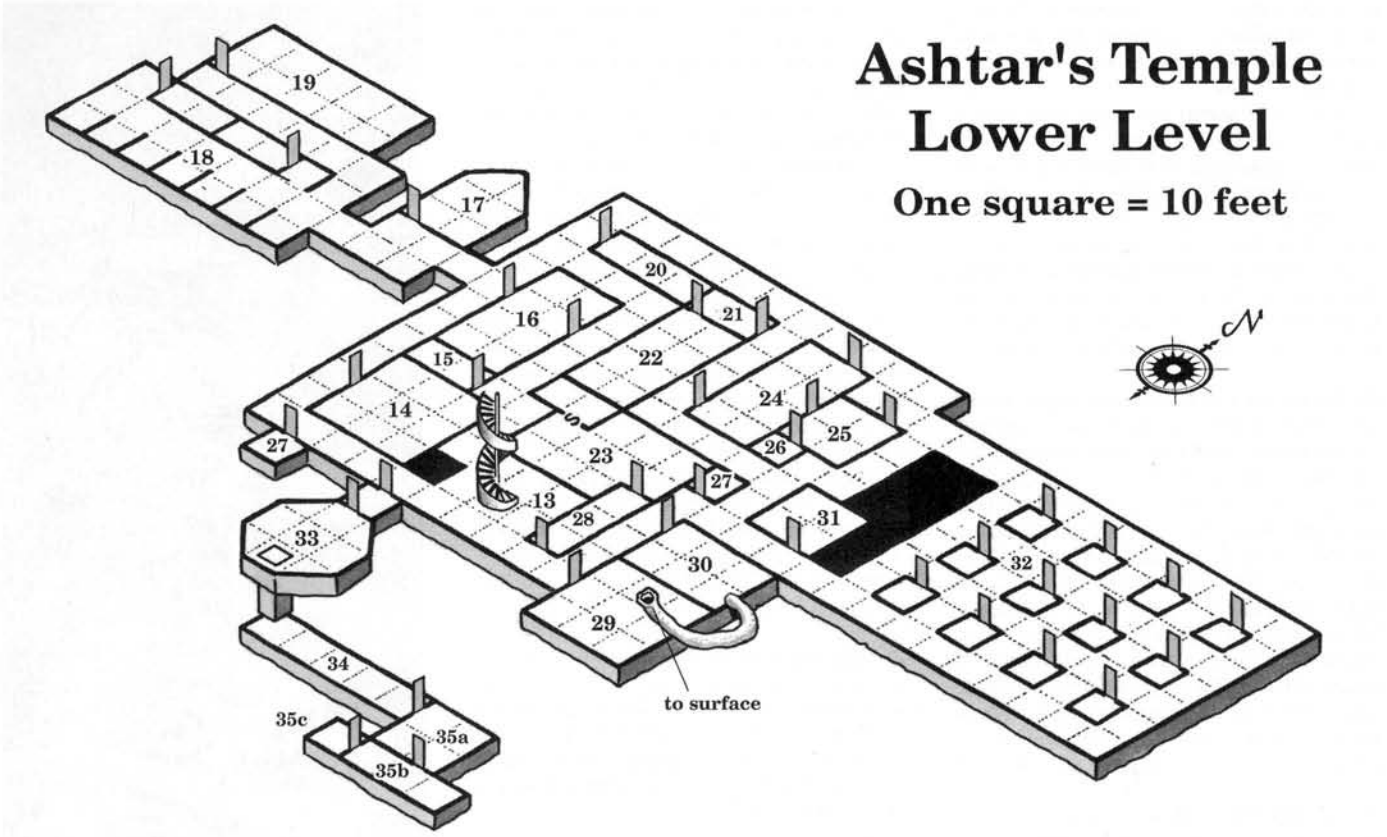
Giant frogs (2): AC 7; MV 3, swim 9; HD 2; hp 10 each; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (bite); SA –3 to surprise, tongue, swallow whole; SW always retreats from fire; SZ S (3' long); ML 8; Int non (0); AL N; XP 175; *MM*/119.

21. Acolyte's Room. This room is typical of other acolyte rooms on this level. A rotting bed takes up most of the space, with a candle holder and an incense burner on a small table next to the bed.

22. Prior Tyreis's Room. The door leading to this room is locked, though thieves suffer no penalties to their Open Locks rolls.

> This room probably accommodated one of the temple's higher ranking priests. A curtained bed on a dais dominates this room. A thick carpet lines the floor, and although it is in good shape, you can tell it would be too heavy to move easily. In the southern corner of the room stands a small altar with candles and an incense burner.

The raggamoffyn completely enshrouds its victim before suffocating it.



A partially shattered armoire holds little more than rotting fabric; you suspect the priest stored his vestments here.

The thick beeswax candles next to the altar are worth 1 sp apiece, and the incense burner is worth 1 gp to any of Ashtar's followers.

There is a chest hidden under the bed. Prior Tyreis, suspicious of his curates, cast *frisky chest* (see *Tome of Magic*) on it. When any creature other than the caster comes within 3 feet of the chest, it sprouts appendages and moves away as quickly as possible. The chest moves until it is at least 10 feet away from the nearest creatures in the area before its appendages disappear. If the creature again approaches within 3 feet, the appendages reappear, and the chest scuttles away. This process continues until the enchantment is negated (through a *dispel magic* or similar spell) or the chest is subdued or destroyed.

The chest can sprout feet (MV 24), wings (MV fly 24, maneuverability class B), or fins (MV swim 24), whichever is most advantageous. It can only move through open spaces; it will not shatter a closed door. The enchantment ends if the object is restrained for 1d4+1 rounds; restraint means that the object is prevented from fleeing.

The chest contains 20 gp, a *philter of stammering and stuttering*, a potion of *healing*, and a scroll with the spells *cure disease, cure light wounds*, and *remove curse* cast at 8th level.

23. Head Priestess Jaetana's Room. The door to this room is locked, although thieves suffer no penalty to their Open Locks rolls.

This contents of this room are draped in cobwebs. A curtained bed on a dais dominates the room; though the curtains are rotting, you can tell they were made from velvet. Two padded chairs sit next to a small table holding an incense burner and a 2'-tall statue of Ashtar. At the foot of the bed squats a large trunk banded in metal.

An altar sits in the southwest corner of the room with two candles next to it and a kneeling pad in front of it. To the east stands an armoire containing tattered vestments. A tapestry depicting Ashtar healing large numbers of begging supplicants hangs next to the armoire.

No spiders live here; however, a living web has draped itself over the kneeling pad in front of the altar.

The living web's touch delivers an electrical shock, causing 1d4 points of damage. Twice per turn it can fire a *lightning bolt* (20 yard range, 3d4 points of damage). All web fragments have this power; thus a living web cut in two can fire four such bolts per turn.

The living web absorbs all electrical energy and permanently gains 1 Hit Die for each 8 hit points of electricity absorbed. Blows from edged weapons inflict full damage; such blows divide it into two smaller wisps. Each has half the parent's remaining hit points and continues to advance on prey. Blunt weapons cause only half damage as the living web stretches to absorb the damage without tearing. Note that separation occurs only as a result of an opponent's attack or an accident; living webs cannot voluntarily divide.

The living web is unaffected by *fear, repulsion*, or similar spells. It can sense vibrations, variations in heat, and the presence of other living webs. Its senses have a maximum range of 90 feet.

Living web: AC 9; MV 6; HD 2; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SA lightning; SD unaffected by fire, water, heat, and cold attacks; SZ S; ML 10; Int semi (4); AL N; XP 650; *MCA3*/117.

The incense burner is worth 1 gp to any of Ashtar's followers, and the statue is worth 5 gp. (It is not very well made and has not withstood the test of time.)

The trunk at the foot of the bed is securely locked but not trapped. Thieves suffer no penalties on their Open Locks rolls. Inside the trunk are the high priestess's vestments. They are in remarkably good shape and are worth 60 gp to any of Ashtar's followers. (The DM should consider awarding bonus XPs if the PCs give the vestments to Guerin.) Also in the trunk is the sacramental altar cloth, used only on special occasions. Since it has been stored safely in the trunk, it has not degraded and is worth 50 gp to a follower of Ashtar.

The tapestry, though valuable to Ashtar's followers, has had water dripping on it for years. Any attempt to remove it from the wall causes parts of it to fall off in an explosion of mold and dust. None of this mold is of the monstrous variety, though it causes PCs to cough for several rounds until the dust settles.

A particularly vicious DM who feels the PCs are looting simply for the money might wish the mold spores to cause some form of respiratory disease two to three days after the PCs finish exploring the temple. Although not fatal, PCs so affected are forced to spend several days in bed, fighting a high fever. Thereafter, those PCs (at the DM's discretion) might be more susceptible to this type of disease. Of course, a *cure disease* spell instantly alleviates any symptoms.

The PCs have a normal chance to find the secret door in the north wall. The secret door is locked, and thieves suffer a –5% penalty to their Open Locks roll. Behind the door is a small space where the high priestess once stored her valuables. Shelves on the walls hold flasks; these once contained potions of *healing*, but some small creature (a mouse, perhaps) has knocked them over, causing their contents to drain out.

A medium-sized chest sits in the middle of the secret room. The chest is protected by a *glyph of warding*, which casts *cause blindness* at anyone opening the chest who does not first speak the name "Karlen." (Karlen was Jaetana's beloved older brother. It is unlikely that the PCs would know this.) Any PC who triggers the *glyph* must make a saving throw vs. spell or be struck blind, suffering a –4 penalty to attack rolls, a +4 penalty to Armor Class, and a +2 penalty to initiative rolls (unless the PC has the Blind-fighting NWP). Inside the chest are three 6"-tall, painted wooden statuettes depicting saints (all of whom are familiar to Ashtar's worshipers), 22 gp, 3 pp, and five gems worth 100 gp, 50 gp, and 10 gp (×3) respectively.

24. Dining Room. The northern door has a 2'-wide hole bored into the bottom of it. The hole was made by the fire beetles that dwell here and scavenge throughout the temple complex. Sensing food when the PCs enter this room, the beetles move to attack.

The apothecary in the village pays 5 gp for each fire gland the PCs remove and return to him; each beetle has three fire glands.

The room contains a large wooden table surrounded by a dozen chairs, half of which collapse under any measurable weight.

Giant fire beetles (4): AC 4; MV 12; HD 1+2; hp 4 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4; SZ S; ML 12; Int non (0); AL N; XP 35; *MM*/18.

25. Kitchen.

> An iron stove sits in the southeast corner, its corroded pipe rising up into the ceiling. Rusting pots and pans lay scattered about the floor; some still hang neatly from their pegs. Old, broken knives lay on the counter in the center of the room. The scent of mold is not as strong here.

Scattered throughout the rubbish on the floor are sixteen giant centipedes. When a PC picks up a pan, the DM should describe the centipedes squirming underneath as "worm-like creatures as long as your arm." The centipedes attack ravenously.

Giant centipedes (16): AC 9; MV 15; HD ¼; hp 2 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 0; SA poison; SZ T; ML 6; Int non (0); AL N; XP 35; *MM*/42.

26. Pantry. This small closet once served as the temple's pantry. Small jars and bottles line racks on the wall. Most of the labels have peeled off, although a few jars marked "oregano" can be found. All the bottles are now either empty or filled with mold.

27. Closet. This storage closet once contained cleaning supplies used by the temple's curates. Not much remains except for long sticks with bits of twig attached that the PCs can identify as brooms.

28. Hallway.

> Hanging on either wall of this 30'-long hall is a tapestry depicting priestly ceremonies and clerics ministering to the sick.

The tapestries have moldered, and removing them has the same effect as described in area **23**. Both tapestries are worthless.

29. Elder Siusan's Room.

> A canopied bed with tattered velvet drapes dominates this chamber. The wall hangings, though nice, are made of inferior materials, suggesting that the former occupant of this chamber was of middling rank. Next to the bed rests a table, atop which rests a statuette and candle holder. In the southeast corner stands an armoire.

The armoire contains rotting vestments. The table holds a painted wooden statuette of Ashtar (worth 5 gp) and a simple candle holder (worth 1 gp to a follower of Ashtar).

Hiding on the canopy above the bed are two whipstings.

A whipsting usually waits for prey with one tentacle curled underneath itself to form a natural spring. Its initial attack consists of suddenly straightening this tentacle to propel itself in a wild spring that ends in a lashing whip of the body, driving its envenomed stinger deep into an opponent (+4 attack bonus). The whipsting then tries to constrict, smother, or strangle prey by remaining attached to it, slapping with its tentacles to drive home its two stings. A whipsting's stinger strikes for 1 point of damage and also injects venom into the prey. The prey must make a successful saving throw vs. poison with a –2 penalty to avoid the venom's effects. If the saving throw fails, the prey shudders uncontrollably on the round following the sting. Nausea and weakness ruin all attacks and spellcasting attempted by the victim in that round and cause the victim to drop all wielded or carried objects. The victim also suffers a +1 penalty to AC for 1 round. On subsequent rounds, the victim can move normally but remains weak; attack and damage rolls suffer –3 penalties in that round, –2 penalties the following round, –1 penalties on the next round, and then return to normal thereafter. Every successful sting results in another round of shuddering (barring a successful saving throw).

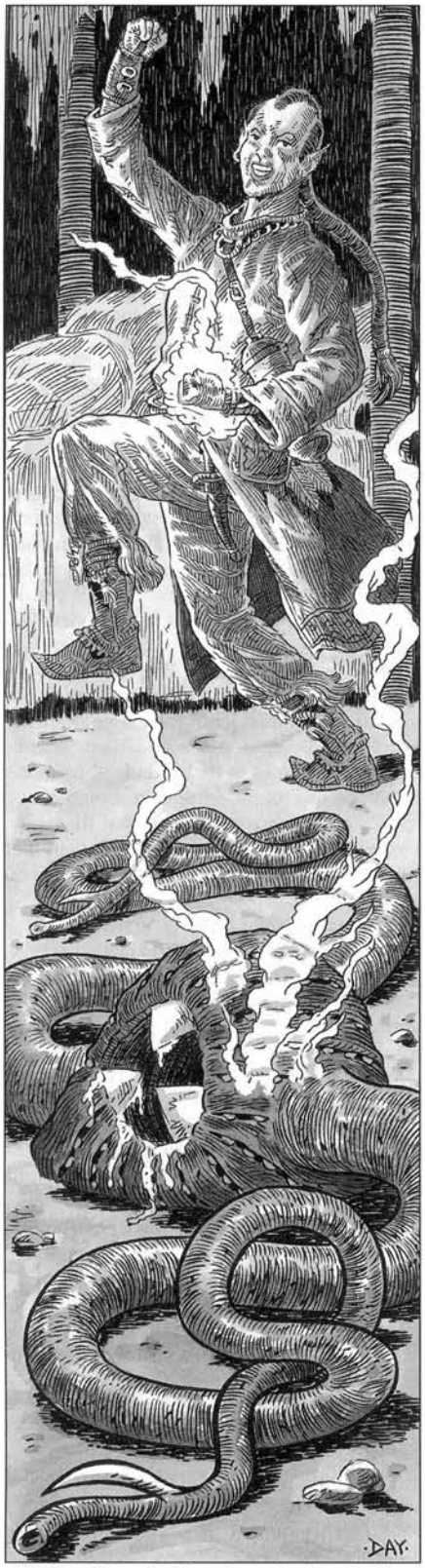
Underneath the bed is a small chest. It is locked, and the lock is trapped with a needle. Although the needle was once poisoned, the poison has degraded, and any character triggering the trap suffers only 1 point of damage. The chest contains 56 sp and 320 cp.

Whipstings (2): AC 7; MV 9; HD 1+4; hp 9 each; THAC0 19 (15 if springing); #AT 3; Dmg 1d2/1 (×2); SA venom; SZ M (2' diameter, 10'-long tentacles); ML 12; Int semi (3); AL N; XP 175; *MCA1*.

30. Canon Xarles's Room. The description of this room is similar to area **29**, except the room is inhabited by a visiting giant weasel. A 3'-wide tunnel leads from this room up to the forest in the back of the temple; a Medium-sized PC or smaller could use this tunnel to escape from the complex, though he or she must traverse the tunnel on hands and knees.

A small locked chest under the bed holds 5 pp, 5 gp, four gems worth 10 gp each, and a secret compartment in the lid holding a scroll with two *cure light wounds* spells.

Giant weasel: AC 6; MV 15; HD 3+3; hp 15; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2d6; SA blood drain; SZ M; ML 14; Int animal (1); AL N; XP 175; *MCA2*/83.



A wizard parades in triumph after slaying his first whipsting.

31. Pantry and Wine Cellar. The door to this room is locked. Thieves suffer a –5% penalty to their Open Locks rolls. Because the temple had an unending problem with acolytes stealing food during the night, the high priestess placed a *glyph of warding* on this door. The character who trips the spell must make a successful saving throw vs. spell or suffer nausea for 1d3 hours, resulting in a –2 penalty to all attack rolls, proficiency checks, ability checks, and saving throws. A successful saving throw negates the effect.

This room is much cooler than the rest of the building and much damper, although the mold does not grow here. Shelves hold wine bottles and other more perishable items.

None of the perishable foods have survived. Most of the wine has turned to vinegar, but if the PCs search for 1 turn, they can find one bottle of golden wine that has aged just right, worth 50 gp to a wine connoisseur.

32. Acolytes' Rooms. When they weren't cleaning the temple complex, studying the healing arts, or helping in the hospital, the temple's acolytes stayed here. This section of the temple is divided into twelve cubicles. Not much remains inside these cubicles but bits of beds and straw.

The northeasternmost cubicle is currently occupied. Affixed to the wall above the door inside the chamber is a vilirij parasite. The vilirij resembles a patch of skin and is 95% undetectable. It waits until someone enters the cubicle and leaves before dropping onto the back of its victim's neck. (A successful attack roll against AC 10 is required, modified by Dexterity if the victim is aware of the creature. Magical modifiers to AC apply as well.)

Once it is attached to its host, the vilirij injects an anesthetizing poison that enables it to drain 1d4 points of damage per day without being detected by the victim.

Vilirij parasite: AC 5; MV 3, fly 6 (A); HD 1+1; hp 5; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SA blood drain; SD disguise, poison; ML 9; SZ T (3"-diameter patch); Int semi (3); AL NE; XP 120; *MCA1* (parasite).

33. Library.

> This octagonal room once served as the temple study and library. Long wooden tables line the center of the room, and hard chairs lay toppled on the floor next to them. Heavy bookcases stand against the walls, and books and scrolls have spilled out onto the floor. Most of the books are ruined, due to a persistent drip from the ceiling that has spread water over most of the floor. The rugs covering the floor appear damp and moldy. Hanging from the ceiling by thin metal chains are three ordinary lanterns.

If the DM wishes, the PCs can find one nonmagical tome (or scroll or map) from the DM's campaign if they search for 1 turn.

Hidden beneath a table and damp rug near the south wall is a wooden trapdoor. Beneath the trapdoor is a wooden ladder that leads down to area **34**. The wooden ladder has rotted in places; the first PC who tries to climb down the ladder causes it to collapse and falls 20 feet, suffering 2d6 points of damage. A PC who falls loses initiative the following round, allowing the tunnel's denizens to gain the first attack. (See area **34** below.)

The lanterns hanging from the library's ceiling can be removed from the hooks on the ends of the chains. The oil inside them has evaporated, but they can be refilled and used.

34. Secret Tunnel.

> Unlike the rest of the structure, this tunnel is not made of gray masonry; it has been dug from the dirt. Holes as big as your head line the sides the tunnel, and the wooden support beams look dangerously weak. Cobwebs stretch from one support beam to another.

The PCs are in no danger from the wooden support beams; they will last at least another century if no repairs are made. The greatest danger comes from the six large spiders that have made this tunnel their home.

Large spiders (6): AC 8; MV 6, web 15; HD 1+1; hp 4 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison (Type A; +2 bonus to saving throws); SZ S; ML 7; Int non (0); AL N; XP 175; *MM*/326.

35a. Tralisa Appears. The door to this room is locked, although thieves suffer no penalty to their Open Locks rolls.

> It looks like no one has been here since the temple was overrun. Dust covers the floor, and the room seems unnaturally cold.
>
> Peering into the room, you see a door to the south. A light seems to manifest underneath the door. As you watch, the light passes through the door, then brightens in front of you. The feeling of cold increases, and the stench of the grave surrounds you. The ghost you met earlier reappears.

This is Tralisa, a second-magnitude ghost that was once the temple's guard captain. The high priestess had cast an *oath* spell on her to protect the temple from outsiders, and when she failed to do so against the original bandits (even though the odds were overwhelming), Tralisa came back to unlife.

Each PC must make a successful saving throw vs. spell or flee in terror from the sight of Tralisa. Although she doesn't want to frighten them, she has no control over the *fear*.

Since this is their second sighting of Tralisa and she did not harm them the first time, each PC receives a +6 bonus to the roll. She also has the power to drain memories, causing 1d10 × 10 days to be forgotten if her attack roll succeeds.

Although Tralisa was once a lawful good fighter, her care for humanity has faded over the years, and now she wants to rest. She has AC –1 (6 on the Ethereal plane). A PC must have a +1 or better magical weapon to harm her. However, parts of her remain semicorporeal. If the DM allows it, a PC could target a specific location, suffering a +1 penalty to initiative and a –4 penalty to the attack roll. If the attack succeeds, the PC strikes the corporeal part of Tralisa and inflicts damage, even without a magical weapon.

Tralisa appears as she did in life, though parts of her are transparent, and her legs trail off into mist. She is bound into stewardship of the temple and cannot leave.

If the PCs have not finished clearing the temple complex of all the monsters that reside within, Tralisa does not let them pass. She tells them that they have not completed their assigned task and instructs them to return once they have. If they clear the temple complex and return here, Tralisa congratulates them on their hard work.

If the PCs attempt to fight her, Tralisa fades without giving up the key to the treasury (areas **35b–c**). The doors to the treasury impose a –30% penalty to Open Locks rolls and can each withstand 60 points of damage.

Tralisa (ghost): AC –1; MV 9; HD 10; hp 52; #AT 1; Dmg drain memories; SA *cause fear*; SD +1 or better weapons to hit, affected only by spells cast by ethereal creatures; SZ M; ML 20; Int high (13); AL LN; XP 7,000; *MM*/130.

Once the PCs clear the temple of monsters, Tralisa speaks to them:

> "Thank you for ridding the temple of its vile denizens. I have grown tired of guarding this temple, and I long to see it thrive again. As long as I am trapped in this state, none of Ashtar's chosen will attempt to resettle. Now that you have removed the vermin infesting the temple, I can move on to my final reward.
>
> "However, there is one final task I must ask of you before I can rest. When I died, there were no priests left to provide the rituals for my journey into the afterlife. Please find my remains and provide a proper burial for them. When you return from that task, you will find a key to the treasury.
>
> "For your bravery, you can take whatever items are left in the treasury. I know that the priests who choose to settle here won't mind. They will build up their stores from donations."

If the PCs ask Tralisa where her remains might be found, she tells them that the attack by the original bandits was a complete surprise. Although she doesn't remember the moment of her death, she knows that she had been resting in her room (area **12**) at the time.

What little is left of Tralisa's remains is buried next to the amber lotus flowers and kampfult in area **11**. Once the PCs defeat the dangerous plants, they can remove her bones and take them to the cemetery in Ashtartown, where Guerin provides the last rites.

When they return to the temple complex, the PCs find the key to the treasury awaiting them in this room, just as Tralisa promised. Tralisa's ghost does not reappear.

35b. Treasury of Gems. The door to this room opens easily with the key Tralisa gave to the PCs. Inside is a small chest, neither locked nor trapped, that contains nine gems worth 500 gp, 100 gp, 50 gp (×3), and 10 gp (×4) respectively. The gems are held inside a velvet bag.

35c. Treasury of Magical Items. The door to this room opens easily with the key Tralisa gave to the PCs. Inside, placed carefully on shelves, are a pair of *bracers of defense AC 6*, a potion of *diminution*, two potions of *healing*, a potion of *extra-healing*, and a scroll of *protection from undead*.

Concluding the Adventure

Although the PCs should not receive the 7,000 XP for "defeating" Tralisa, the DM should feel free to award them 1,000 XP for laying her spirit to rest. For every votary item belonging to the temple that the PCs do not steal, they should receive double the gold piece value in experience points. (This translates to roughly 250 XPs for the lot.)

Not long after the PCs clear the temple, Guerin returns with workers from the main temple, who rebuild the fractured walls. In time, the temple becomes a fully functioning place of healing again, and people begin to arrive from far away to be cured of their illnesses. Ashtartown begins to prosper again, and the PCs are heralded as local heroes. Their reputation for bravery and honesty spreads far and wide, and who knows what adventures might come their way? Ω

Nodwick
www.nodwick.com
by Aaron Williams
WHAT HAPPENED?
THOSE BITS OF CLOTH LEAPT UP AND COVERED NODWICK!
FRET NOT! I HAVE A SOLUTION!
I READ ABOUT THIS CREATURE IN "GET IT OFF ME" MAGAZINE. IT'S A RAGGAMOFFYN. A MONSTER HUNTER SAID TO GRAB THE TATTERED STRIP ON THE VICTIM'S LEFT LEG...
AND PULL!
I'M GUESSING THAT THE MONSTER HUNTER'S ASSISTANT PERFORMED THIS OPERATION, HUH?
MMPH.*
*I THINK I SHOULD'VE READ THE WHOLE ARTICLE.

Drok and his minions guard the north gate to the Underdark enclave of Khazefryn.

KHAZEFRYN

BY FELIX DOUGLAS

Enter at your own risk!

Artwork by Brad McDevitt
Cartography by Chris Perkins

A fan of the old D-series modules, Felix wanted to cram as many monsters into one subterranean adventure as possible. The result was this wicked scenario—Felix's second published work.

"Khazefryn" is an AD&D® adventure for 4–6 characters of levels 9–14 (about 60 total levels). The predominantly good-aligned party should include a mixture of character classes. This adventure takes place in the Underdark and can be easily adapted to suit any subterranean campaign.

Adventure Background

The duergar monastery of Khazefryn was constructed 250 years ago, hewn from an enormous natural cavern in the Underdark. A deep lake swallowed the cavern floor, and stalactites and clusters of pale, light-generating crystals clung to the high ceiling. Rising from the lake to meet the cavern's roof were six great pillars of gray rock. The duergar shattered the tops of the pillars to create "islands" that towered above the dark water at varying heights. Atop these islands they built the structures that would eventually comprise the monastery, and they named the complex "Khazefryn" in honor of their king, Khazefryn the Drowslayer.

The duergar used magic to create a series of floating crystal disks between the various islands, making passage through the cavern more expeditious. They also built two guard stations into the cavern walls to defend the north and south passages and trained cave fishers to use their sticky filaments to reel in fish from the lake below.

Khazefryn served as a duergar stronghold for more than two centuries. The monastery "fathers" were dedicated to training young duergar in the psionic arts, and duergar from the nearby cities sent their children here to hone their psionic powers.

The duergar abandoned Khazefryn when, fifty years ago, the psionicists training at the monastery were summoned to defend the nearby duergar city of Thunzarad from attack. Despite their valiant defense, Thunzarad was destroyed by a illithid-derro assault. The survivors of the monastery, fearing their enemies' advancement, were forced to relocate along with other duergar refugees from the shattered city. Khazefryn was soon overrun with all manner of creatures and became the site of countless skirmishes. Later, a powerful group of drow transformed the monastery into a waystation and trade bazaar. Under their sinister auspices, Khazefryn thrived like it never had before.

Two years ago, a pair of deep dragons named Stalactite (female) and Stalagmite (male) visited Khazefryn in drow form and took an immediate liking to it. Driven from

their last lair by a gargantuan deepspawn and its monstrous minions and determined to make the former duergar monastery their new lair, the dragons infiltrated Khazefryn and quickly subjugated the local population. The drow who opposed them were destroyed or devoured, their equipment passed down to others who had not opposed the dragons. Through bribery and bullying, Stalactite and Stalagmite won some measure of loyalty from their new drow servitors.

Not ones to shut themselves away, the dragons welcomed all manner of evil creatures into their lair. Refugees from throughout the Underdark were granted permission to settle in Khazefryn, provided they pledged their undying loyalty to the cavern's undisputed rulers. The dragons used these creatures to gather slaves, who were quickly put to work excavating a new lair for the dragons overlooking the rest of the cavern. Once the task was complete, the dragons devoured the slaves and took to their new abode. The dragons have since divided the cavern's islands into "camps." Although the dragons like to keep the various camps bickering among themselves, the camps are forbidden from openly attacking one another. (Of course, that does not discourage covert attacks.) Thus, the troglodytes, bainligor, kuo-toa, varkha, and drow that share the cavern are sworn to an uneasy alliance. In the event Khazefryn is attacked, each camp must be united in the speedy extermination of unwanted interlopers. Any camp that does not contribute to the cavern's defense faces the dragons' wrath.

Setting the Stage

Before running the adventure, the DM needs to determine why the party would visit Khazefryn. Here are several possibilities:

Just Passing Through

While delving into the mysteries of the Underdark or searching for the ruined duergar city of Thunzarad, the PCs stumble upon Khazefryn. In this case, their goal could be to bargain for safe passage through Khazefryn. Once they bribe the fomorian giant guarding the North Gate, they must successfully navigate the cavern and reach the South Gate, where they are questioned by the drow and ordered to pay homage to the deep dragons by surrendering treasure and magical items. If the PCs comply, they are allowed to leave Khazefryn unmolested. If the PCs resist, they are attacked and the general alarm is raised.

Looking for Something

The PCs are searching for a powerful magical item, a stolen *objet d'art*, or something equally important or valuable. A group of svirfneblin inform the PCs that the item they seek was taken to Khazefryn by a mongrelman thief, kuo-toa raiders, or a drow. The PCs can either fight their way into Khazefryn or bribe the fomorian giant at the North Gate. Once they enter the cavern, they must search for the missing item, which by now is undoubtedly part of the deep dragons' hoard. To win back the item, the PCs must either slay or bargain with the deep dragons and their drow allies.

Looking for Someone

A drow thief wanted for assassinating the svirfneblin queen or dwarven king has taken refuge in Khazefryn. A considerable bounty has been placed on the drow's head, and the PCs have come to collect. The drow in question, Xulltyrr, has fallen out of favor with the deep dragons for placing the entire "community" at risk with his antics; the dragons might consider surrendering the assassin to the PCs in exchange for something valuable, such as a powerful magical item or two. Otherwise, to amuse themselves, they might require that the PCs choose a champion who must then fight Xulltyrr in a duel with poisoned daggers, while the dragons and other drow look on. If the PC prevails, the party may take Xulltyrr's head back to their benefactors.

Gathering Information

The PCs are hired by a nearby svirfneblin community to gather information about Khazefryn. The deep gnomes have been unable to infiltrate the cavern and need to gather tactical information in case the forces of Khazefryn decide to attack. The gnomes have heard a number of unconfirmed rumors, including a rumor that Khazefryn is ruled by a deep dragon.

Using stealth rather than brute force, the PCs must somehow elude the guards at the North Gate and enter the cavern undetected. Once inside, they can begin reconnoitering Khazefryn, confirming the presence of not one but two deep dragons.

Conducting Trade

The PCs might have something they wish to trade. Perhaps the exploration of a ruined drowic shrine yielded an obsidian statuette of the goddess Lolth; surely any drow would pay handsomely to have such a priceless item returned safely!

Conversely, the PCs might be working for a dwarven king who wishes to trade a drow prisoner (a captured thief named Xulltyrr) for several dwarven slaves held in Khazefryn. The PCs are sent to negotiate for the safe release of the dwarves and to handle the prisoner exchange. Unfortunately, the dwarven prisoners belong to the kuo-toa, who insist that the PCs recompense them for their loss.

Khazefryn

Khazefryn can be located anywhere in the Underdark, although it should be near a ruined duergar city. The former duergar monastery consists of two guard stations built into the walls of the cavern (areas **1** and **8** respectively), six rocky "islands" rising up from the underground lake (areas **2–7**), and the deep dragons' lair (areas **9–10**).

The great cavern is dimly illuminated by naturally glowing, fist-sized crystals that grow among the stalactites on the ceiling (which is 200 feet above water level). Crystals removed from the ceiling continue to glow for 12 hours before their light fades forever. The crystals radiate no heat and illuminate an area equal to that of a torch.

Khazefryn is an active, bustling place. PCs can see activity on each of the islands as well as hear the clicking of the hook horrors in area **3** and the shrieking of the bainligor in area **5**.

The walls of the cavern and the islands are sheer but roughly hewn, with plenty of small handholds and niches; no penalties apply to the PC's Climbing checks when scaling these surfaces. The buildings built atop the islands and the guard stations embedded in the cavern walls are windowless and smoothly carved from the living rock. They are more difficult to climb; the DM should impose a –20% penalty to such climbing attempts.

The islands of Khazefryn are linked by a series of *levitating* crystal disks. The disks spread themselves equidistantly across the void and cannot be pulled from their positions. Because the islands vary in height, the disks float at varying heights, appearing as 5'-wide crystal "stepping stones." The disks are enchanted so that they float closer to one another as soon as a living creature tries to step from one disk to the next. Thus, there's no chance of a creature or person accidentally falling between the disks. Casting a successful *dispel magic* on a disk causes the targeted disk to plunge into the lake and sink like a stone. A *disintegrate* spell destroys a disk if it fails its saving throw. (Treat the disks as "rock, crystal" with a +4 bonus to all saving throws.) If one disk falls, the remaining disks in the "chain" space themselves out to "fill in" the gap. The disks are treated as 17th-level magic for purposes of dispelling.

The cold, mist-shrouded freshwater lake that fills the base of the cavern is 50 feet deep in the middle and 30 feet deep along the perimeter. Countless fish live in the lake, providing an ample food supply for the cavern's island-dwelling denizens. The lake is also home to some larger creatures that pose a threat to anyone foolish enough to fall within

reach. The largest of these aquatic predators is a 30'-long vurgens (giant gulper eel) that the kuo-toa call Oolabol (named after one of Blibdoolpoolp's offspring) and the drow call Qualntana ("deep lurker"). The deep dragons call it a nuisance but tolerate its presence.

Even more predatory than the vurgens is the tribe of kopoacinth (aquatic gargoyles) that lurks beneath the lake. The kopoacinth tend to wait near the islands and edges of the cavern, hoping to catch someone falling into the water. The vurgens ignores them.

Vurgens: AC 4; MV swim 15; HD 8+8; hp 52; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 2d6 (bite) or 3d4 (tail slap); SA swallow whole, paralysis, acid; SZ H (30' long); ML 9; Int animal (1); AL N; XP 5,000; *MCA4*/37.

Kopoacinth (24): AC 5; MV 9, swim 15; HD 4+4; hp 23 each; THAC0 15; #AT 4; Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d6/1d4; SD +1 or better weapons to hit; SZ M (6' tall); ML 11; Int low (6); AL CE; XP 420; *MM*/125 (gargoyle).

1. North Gate.

Carved out of the cavern wall, this structure has two 20'-tall rooms (areas **1A** and **1B**) and a gateway leading to a 20'-wide tunnel heading north. The iron portcullis that guards the north passage is large, heavy, and designed to hold back creatures of all sizes; PC trying to lift the gate or bend its bars suffer a –50% penalty to their Bend Bars/Lift Gates rolls.

The North Gate is defended by Drok, a greedy but stupid fomorian giant, and his assemblage of subterranean lizards and blindheims. The lizards and blindheims are difficult to control, but Drok manages. Whenever a lizard swallows a blindheim, Drok beats the lizard until the blindheim is regurgitated. The lizards don't care for the experience and swallow the blindheims only when they haven't been fed properly.

Drok emerges from his den (area **1B**) to confront visitors. If he is bribed with treasure amounting to 1,000 gp or more, he opens the portcullis and allows the PCs to enter. A simple command to the lizards in Drok's booming voice keeps them from attacking. If the PCs harass Drok or make him feel stupid, he opens the portcullis and commands the lizards to attack. Drok then grabs his club and joins the fray next round, followed closely by the blindheims.

1A. Reptile Pen. Here is where Drok keeps the lizards and blindheims. The lizards are plainly visible as large shapes in the darkness. The blindheims are harder to spot, since they are small and have translucent eyelids that cover their beam-emitting eyes.

The subterranean lizards can smell prey approaching within 30 feet of the gate; their hungry hisses are loud enough to alert the fomorian. The blindheims remain hidden near the walls until the gate is opened and they are allowed to attack; at that time, they open their eyes, hoping to blind their prey. Drok and the lizards are accustomed to the blinding rays but still suffer a –2 attack penalty to attacks when in range of the lightbeams.

The iron winch for the portcullis is built into the southeast wall. Turning the crank requires a successful Bend Bars/Lift Gates roll with no penalty.

The floor of the pen is covered with dung, a few humanoid bones, and little else.

1B. Drok's Den. This room serves as the fomorian giant's lair. A heaping pile of maggot-infested furs fills the room, and the skulls of slain humanoids have been neatly stacked against the walls. Beneath the pile of furs is Drok's treasure:

- Sack containing 3,300 cp and 900 sp.
- Sack containing 2,500 gp.
- Plain wooden coffer containing a 1,000-gp amethyst amid thirty other semi-precious stones (worth 50 gp each).
- Suit of dwarven *chainmail* +3.
- *Spear* +2 carved to resemble a long, bony arm ending in a skeletal hand clutching a 6"-long, sharpened steel tip.

Drok (fomorian giant): AC 3 (scraps of metal in clothing); MV 9; HD 13+3; hp 89; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 2d6+8 (giant-sized club) or 2d4+8 (unarmed); SD rarely surprised (1-in-10 chance); SZ H (14' tall); ML 14; Int low (7); AL NE; XP 6,000; *MM*/139.

Subterranean lizards (3): AC 5; MV 12; HD 6; hp 42 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2d6 (bite); SA attack roll of natural 20 indicates that the lizard has clamped down its jaws for double damage (4d6 points) plus an automatic 2d6 points of damage each round thereafter; SD climb walls and ceilings; SZ H (20' long); ML 10; Int non (0); AL N; XP 650; *MM*/226.

Blindheims (16): AC 3; MV 9; HD 4+2; hp 20 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SA blinding stare (make a saving throw vs. wand or be blinded for 1d10+10 rounds; creatures relying on infravision suffer a –3 penalty to the roll; those who make the saving throw suffer a –2 attack penalty instead of a –4 penalty); SD immune to glare; SZ S (4' tall); ML 10; Int animal (1); AL CE; XP 270; *MCA4*/11.

2. Varkha Camp.

This "island" rises 60 feet above water level. The walls of the island taper inward, then drop sharply into the water. Two buildings stand atop the island, and clinging to the island's perimeter are eight cave fishers trained to catch fish for the island's inhabitants—the varkhas.

Varkhas are a race of short, brutal lizard men native to the Underdark. These ones were driven from their domain by dwarves and forced to take sanctuary in Khazefryn. For a time, the varkhas were toadies of the larger, more powerful troglodytes (area **3**). Several weeks ago, however, four greater dopplegangers infiltrated Khazefryn and, in the guise of varkhas, liberated the lizard folk from their troglodyte overseers. One of the dopplegangers challenged and slew the troglodyte champion and now presides over the varkhas as their new *gsssrat* ("master of the hunt").

The dopplegangers plan to conquer more islands soon. They plan to infiltrate the troglodytes next, then continue until every one of them has an "island" to command. The deep dragons are not yet aware of the dopplegangers' presence and would have them hunted down and exterminated if they knew.

The varkhas contribute to the defense of the cavern as best they can, attacking intruders with hurled spears and bone clubs. Sebbith, the varkha shaman, possesses a *chime of interruption* that prevents the casting of spells with verbal and somatic components within 30 feet. (Spellcasters are entitled to a saving throw vs. breath weapon to cast such a spell successfully.) The varkhas are not aware that the *chime* is magical, but it inspires them nonetheless. Sebbith rattles it constantly during battle to improve the morale of the other varkhas. (Their morale improves by 4 when the *chime* is rung.)

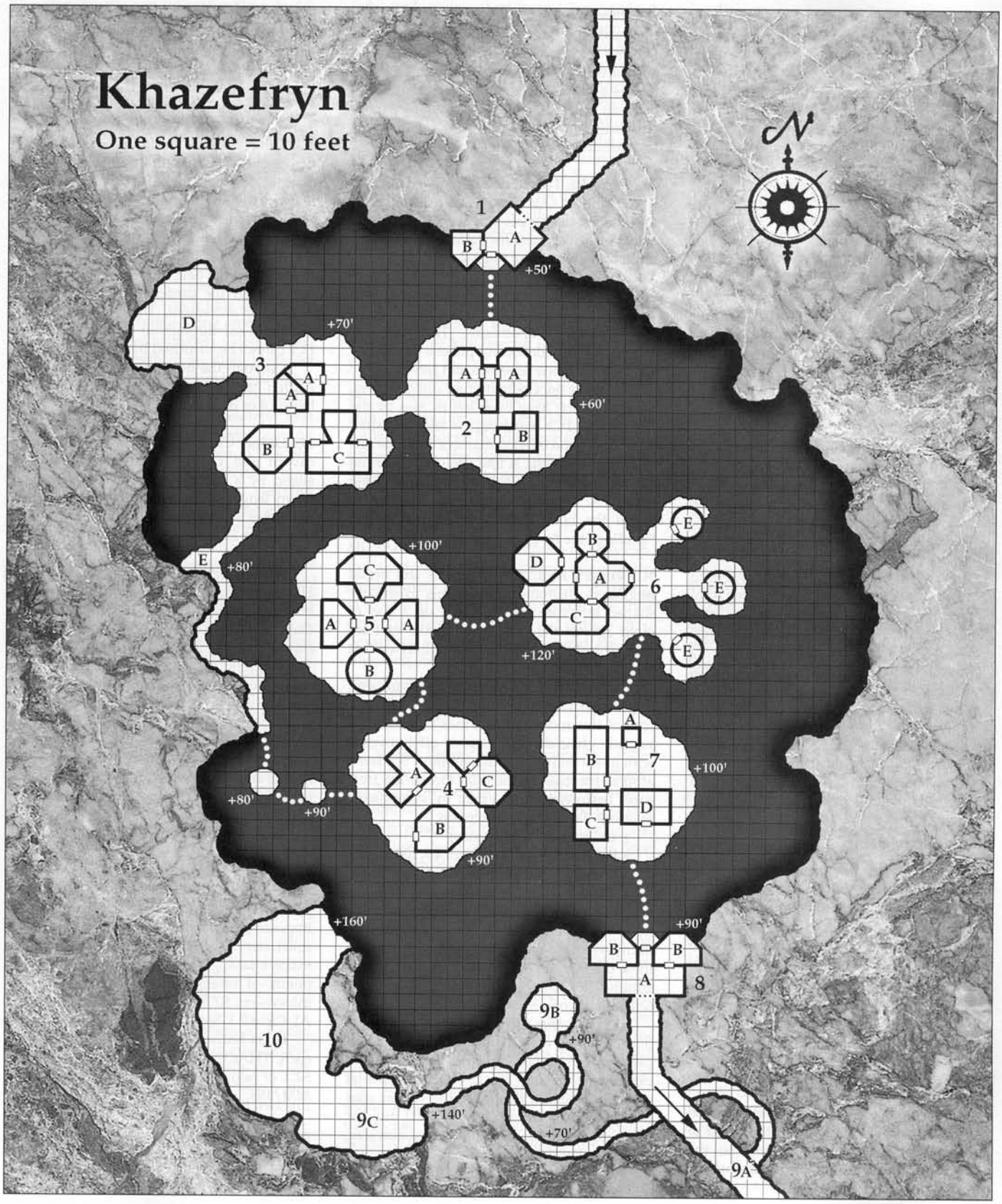
The greater dopplegangers avoid a direct fight, instead using their shapeshifting powers to cause as much confusion as possible. They have no loyalty to the varkhas but rally to each other's defense. If combat erupts on this island, the troglodytes arrive in 1d4+1 rounds via the natural stone bridge connecting this island to area **3**. The troglodytes take advantage of any opportunity to reaffirm their hold on the varkhas' island.

The cave fishers clinging to the island's precipices fight only in defense. They otherwise ignore alarms and sounds of combat.

2A. Main Barracks. This stone structure accommodates 48 varkhas, 24 in each octagonal chamber. The floors are covered with slime and fishbones, and non-varkhas fighting in this area suffer a –2 penalty to attack rolls due to slippery conditions.

Aside from the varkha's weapons, there is no treasure here.

2B. Dopplegangers' Abode. This L-shaped building provides shelter for the four greater dopplegangers, three varkha *sllithi* (lieutenants), and the varkha shaman, Sebbith. The chamber's furnishings, originally created for duergar soldiers, have been smashed to pieces and replaced with "beds" of puffball fungi


Khazefryn
One square = 10 feet
N
1
A
B
+50'
D
+70'
3
A
A
B
C
2
A
A
B
+60'
E
+80'
+100'
C
A
5
A
B
B
D
A
C
6
E
E
E
+120'
A
4
C
B
+80'
+90'
+90'
A
B
7
D
C
+100'
+160'
+90'
B
B
A
8
9B
+90'
10
9C
+140'
+70'
9A

and moss. Built into one wall is a stone hearth currently not in use. Its chimney is home to six harmless bats that shriek and fly out when the chimney is examined.

The dopplegangers keep their treasure in a locked iron strongbox near the hearth. The dopplegangers do not need a key for the box, since they can open it simply by molding a finger into the appropriate keylike shape. The strongbox holds the following treasure:

- 250 pp (loose).
- A folded *bag of devouring*.
- A potion of *extra healing* in a hollow, lacquered toadstool "flask."

Greater dopplegangers (4): AC 2; MV 12; HD 9; hp 47 each; THAC0 11; #AT 2; Dmg 1d12/1d12; SA *shape change* (can assume the form of any humanoid creature 4–8 feet tall, including specific individuals), *ESP*; SD immune to *sleep, charm, hold,* and *know alignment* spells; save as F18; SZ M; ML 17; Int genius (17); AL NE; XP 4,000; *MCA2*/43.

Sebbith, varkha male P2 (shaman): AC 6; MV 12, swim 9; hp 9; THAC0 20; #AT 2; Dmg 1d6/1d6; SA/SD spells; SZ M (4' tall); ML 9; Int average (10); AL LE; XP 65; *MCA4*/89; *chime of interruption* (holy symbol).

Spells (3): 1st—*cure light wounds, faerie fire, sanctuary*.

Varkhas (48): AC 6; MV 12, swim 9; HD 1; hp 5 each; THAC0 19; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1d6/1d6 or by weapon type (1d6 with spiked bone club or spear); SZ M (5' tall); ML 10; Int average (9); AL LE; XP 35; *MCA4*/89.

Varkha *slliths* (3): HD 2; hp 10 each; XP 65; other statistics same as above.

Cave fishers (8): AC 4; MV 1; HD 3; hp 15 each; THAC0 17 (15 with trapline); #AT 2; Dmg 2d4/2d4 (pincers); SA adhesive trapline; SD trapline can only be cut with +1 or better weapons; SZ M (7' long); ML 12; Int semi (3); AL N; XP 175; *MM*/40.

3. Troglodyte Camp.

A natural stone bridge arches between the varkha "island" and this one, currently ruled by troglodytes. The troglodytes' "island" rises 70 feet above water level. The walls of the island taper inward, then drop sharply into the water. Three buildings stand atop the island, including one with a steeply pitched roof (area **3C**). Unlike other islands, this one abuts the nearby cavern wall (area **3D**).

The troglodyte island does not have cave fishers, so the trogs instead subsist on fish purchased from the kuo-toa (area **4**) or fungi from their garden (area **3D**).

The troglodytes' "island" is the largest in Khazefryn, and the trogs are justly proud of this fact. For a time, they subjugated the nearby tribe of varkhas, but the varkhas are no longer under the trogs' control.

When a general alarm is sounded, the troglodytes gather their hook horrors into a fighting force and arm themselves with axes and barbed javelins, using the latter to attack targets outside melee range. The troglodytes have no compunctions about pursuing prey onto islands other than their own. They don't take prisoners, killing all foes they meet.

3A. Barracks. This stone building is split into two chambers. Quartered here are a total of 24 troglodytes, twelve per chamber. The quarters are unfurnished save for some beds of damp mold upon which the trogs sleep.

3B. Old Apothecary. When Khazefryn was ruled by the duergar, this structure served as the monastery's apothecary. The staff was responsible for concocting potions and brewing miscellaneous remedies and salves.

The walls once bore myriad stone shelves, most of which have been left in ruin by the troglodytes. PCs searching the area find shattered flasks and other containers amid the bits of broken shelving. A few shelves remain on the walls, but their original contents are long gone. The troglodytes use this building to house the hook horrors when they're not "tending" the fungi garden (area **3D**).

3C. Vthek's Hall. The imperious and brutal troglodyte chieftain occupies this irregularly shaped structure. Vthek sleeps on a bed of mold against the west wall. To the east are smaller beds for the twelve troglodytes that serve as Vthek's personal guard.

To the north lies a separate enclosure with a spectacular crystal ceiling. Against the back wall of this room stands Vthek's "throne": a vaguely chair-shaped heap of offal covered with green and yellow mushrooms. Scattered around the base of the offal throne are treasures bestowed upon Vthek by sycophantic inferiors clamoring for attention:

- 450 ep and 760 sp (loose).
- Fourteen gems (3 × 50 gp, 4 × 100 gp, 5 × 250 gp, and 2 × 500 gp respectively).
- Heaps of miscellaneous, nonmagical weapons taken from slain foes (varkha axes, kuo-toan spears, dwarven warhammers, derro secari daggers, and so forth). Among these the PCs can find a small *shield –2, missile attractor*, its surface sculpted to resemble a screaming woman's visage.
- A *helm of fire resistance* (similar to a *ring of fire resistance*) with a phoenix-shaped headpiece and fire motif. The wearer of the helm can assume the form of a 12-HD fire elemental once per week. In this form, the wearer uses the elemental's Armor Class, THAC0, number of attacks, damage, immunity to fire, and size, but keeps her own hit points and senses.
- A chaotic good *trident* +2 that allows the wielder to *detect invisibility* at will whenever the weapon is held. When wielded by evil creatures, the weapon behaves as a *trident* –2 with no special abilities.
- A nine-headed hydra-shaped amulet made of gold with ruby chips for eyes (worth 3,500 gp total). The amulet weighs 2 lbs.

3D. Fungi Garden. An impressive fungi garden grows throughout this open area. The duergar apothecary relied on the garden's many varieties of mold, spores, and toadstools to create potions and salves. These days, the garden provides a food supply for the troglodytes and their hook horror sentinels. When not held in area **3B**, the hook horrors wander the garden, fertilizing the earth with their excrement. Their clacking noises can be heard throughout the cavern, so the PCs cannot be surprised by them.

Although the mushrooms growing in the garden can be quite large, none of them is harmful or dangerous.

3E. Ledge. Clinging to the west wall of the cavern and connected to the troglodytes' island by a natural stone arch is a roughly hewn ledge. At least one troglodyte patrols this ledge at all times, keeping a close eye on the nearby islands.

Vthek (troglodyte chieftain): AC 5; MV 12; HD 6; hp 35; THAC0 15 (includes Strength bonus, 12 with troglodyte javelin); #AT 5 or 2; Dmg 1d4+5/1d4+5/1d4+5/1d4+5/1d4+2 (4 claws, 1 bite) or 2d4+5/2d4+5 (2 javelins); SA 18/97 Strength, stench (opponents in melee range must make a saving throw vs. poison or lose 1d6 points of Strength for 10 rounds); SD 90' infravision; SZ L (8' tall); ML 11; Int low (6); AL CE; XP 650; *MM*/348.

Years ago, Vthek was captured by mind flayers and subjected to cruel mutation experiments. Vthek has four arms, increased size and Strength, and no tail.

Troglodytes (36): AC 5; MV 12; HD 2; hp 9 each; THAC0 19 (16 with troglodyte javelin); #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1d2/1d2/1d4+1 (claw/claw/bite) or 2d4 (stone ax, troglodyte javelin); SA ambush (chameleon power imposes a –4 penalty on opponents' surprise rolls), stench (opponents in melee range must make a saving throw vs. poison or lose 1d6 points of Strength for 10 rounds); SD 90' infravision; SZ M (6' tall); ML 11; Int low (6); AL CE; XP 175; *MM*/348.

Hook horrors (8): AC 3; MV 9; HD 5; hp 24 each; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1d8/1d8/2d6; SZ L (9' tall); ML 12; Int low (5); AL N; XP 175; *MM*/195.

4. Kuo-toa Camp.

The kuo-toan "island" rises 90 feet above water level, its walls tapering inward before

plunging sharply into the water. Three buildings stand atop the island, and clinging to the island's edges are four cave fishers that use their adhesive traplines to reel in fish from the lake below. Visitors to the kuo-toan island can see the gaping cave mouth to the southwest leading to Stalagmite's lair (area **10**).

The kuo-toa are not as numerous as their troglodyte and bainligor neighbors, but they are second only to the drow in influence. The kuo-toa leader, Goolp, is ruthless and cagey. At one time, he and his fellow kuo-toa served an aboleth named Ul'hoanoth, but Goolp turned on the creature and slew it, freeing his people from the aboleth's control. Believing himself Blibdoolpoolp's "chosen one," Goolp then took "his people" on a long pilgrimage through the Underdark, slaying anything that stood in his way. Unfortunately, Goolp underestimated the strength of an illithid outpost and lost 90% of his forces before Blugmool, his priest advisor, convinced him to retreat. Goolp brought the survivors to Khazefryn and struck a deal with the deep dragons, carving out a niche for his people. Once in a while, Goolp and Woolm leave Khazefryn to hunt for slaves in nearby caverns, leaving Blugmool in charge. The kuo-toa respect the deep dragons but don't go out of their way to please them. They despise the drow and bainligor and view the varkha and troglodytes as primitive and insignificant.

During a recent hunting expedition, Goolp and Woolm were accosted by a roving band of dwarves. During the fracas, a fish-headed mongrelman leapt from the shadows to strike down the dwarf leader. The dwarves were eventually slain, and Goolp welcomed the mongrelman into his clan. Capitalizing on the mongrelman's Move Silently and Hide in Shadows skills, Goolp uses his new ally to spy on Khazefryn's other denizens. Thus, there is only a 20% chance that the mongrelman, Fishface, is on the kuo-toan island when the PCs arrive. To determine Fishface's whereabouts, roll 1d10 and consult the following table:

Roll	Fishface's Location
1–2	Troglodyte Camp (area **3**)
3–4	Kuo-toa Camp (area **4**)
5–6	Bainligor Camp (area **5**)
7–8	Stalactite's Lair (area **6**)
9–0	Drow Camp (area **7**)

When a general alarm is sounded, Goolp and Woolm quaff their potions of *invulnerability*. Blugmool casts *resist fire* spells on both warriors. Once intruders are detected, the priest casts *aid* spells on Goolp and Woolm, (granting them 1d8 extra hit points and a +1 bonus to attack rolls and saving throws for 9 rounds), followed by a *prayer* spell (giving the kuo-toa +1 bonuses to attack rolls, damage rolls, and saving throws and imposing –1 penalties upon the attack rolls, damage rolls, and saving throws of their enemies). While Goolp and Woolm seek out enemies to slay, Blugmool stays with the remaining kuo-toa.

Fishface uses the ensuing chaos to backstab any non-kuo-toan he encounters. (This includes PCs and other NPCs.) If he spots either Goolp or Woolm locked in mortal combat, he tries to maneuver so that he can backstab an obvious enemy. Note that Fishface's *slippers of spider climbing* allow him to walk along walls and ceilings.

4A. Kuo-toa Barracks. This building serves as the barracks for the ten kuo-toan males and six kuo-toan females. Woolm has assigned some of the males to watch over the dwarven slaves (in area **4B**); the rest remain here most of the time.

This building once housed duergar steeders. The walls are covered with weblike frescoes and motifs, and protruding from the walls 4 feet above the floor are eight domed, spider dens. The kuo-toa have filled these dark, marble enclaves with mats of moss and now use them as beds. Hidden beneath each moss bed are 3d6 gp and 3d6 sp.

4B. Spawning Pool. The kuo-toa recently captured a group of six dwarves and are using the stout miners to excavate a large spawning pool so that the female kuo-toa can lay their eggs. The dwarves have carved out a 6'-deep hexagonal section of the floor and are now chiselling steps down into the pool and fashioning clay tiles for the pool's floor and sides.

The dwarf slaves are watched by 1d6+4 kuo-toa males.

4C. Master Psionicist's Sanctuary. This structure once housed a powerful duergar psionicist but now serves as the lair of Goolp, Woolm, Blugmool, and Fishface. The building actually consists of two rooms: an octagonal meditation chamber with a black-tiled floor and 30'-high, peaked roof, and a smaller bedchamber.

The meditation chamber is home to five carrion crawlers that the kuo-toa keep as pets and "watchdogs." (The kuo-toa are immune to paralysis and are ignored by the crawlers.)

Spaced around the walls of the meditation chamber are eight iron braziers, two of which have been knocked over by the carrion crawlers. Carved into the walls near the braziers are several arched niches that once held crystals designed to contain psionic energy. The duergar removed the crystals before abandoning Khazefryn, and Goolp has filled the niches with the skulls and decapitated heads of slain dwarves, gnomes, drow, bainligor, troglodytes, and other Underdark dwellers.

The smaller bedchamber contains moss beds for the kuo-toa leaders and a stone basin with an iron pump set into the north wall. The basin are connected to a pipe that leads down to the lake below, and anyone can use the pump to bring water up through the pipe, filling the basin. The kuo-toa use this ready water supply to moisten their skin.

Piled in three open chests near Goolp's moss bed are the kuo-toa's treasures:

- 940 pp and 2,250 gp (loose).
- Eight unmarked potions in *glassteeled* crystal vials (*climbing, fire breath, fomorian giant control, healing, oil of disenchantment*, and *philter of persuasiveness*).
- 23 aquamarines (worth 100 gp each) and six tourmalines (worth 500 gp each).
- *Wand of illumination* with 4 charges.
- Black, octopus-shaped flask containing four applications of *Keoghtom's ointment* (a purplish, sweet-smelling unguent).
- Blue quartz statuette of Blibdoolpoolp (worth 400 gp) with a *Nystul's magic aura* spell cast on it. Any non-kuo-toa who takes the statuette is *cursed* (–1 to attack rolls and saving throws) until the item is dropped or destroyed or until a *remove curse* spell is cast upon it.

Goolp, kuo-toa male F10: AC 0; MV 9, swim 18; hp 77; THAC0 10 (includes Strength bonus, 9 with *barbed harpoon +1*, 8 with *dagger +2*); #AT 3 (1 claw and 2 dagger strikes each round) or 1 (harpoon strike); Dmg 1d4+3 (claw), 1d4+4 (*dagger +2*) or 2d6+4 (*barbed harpoon +1*); SA 18/09 Strength, *barbed harpoon +1* (inflicts 2d6+4 points of damage; victim must make a successful saving throw of 13+ on 1d20 to avoid being snagged, knocked to the ground, and stunned for 1d4 rounds); SD gluey shield (anyone who attacks the kuo-toa from the front has a 25% chance of getting his weapon stuck fast); 60' infravision; 1-in-10 chance of being surprised; immune to poison, paralysis, and illusions; electrical attacks inflict half or no damage; *magic missiles* inflict only 1 point of damage per missile; 25% chance to escape *webs* and grappling attempts; SW –2 to saving throws vs. fire-based attacks, suffer full damage from fire-based attacks, –1 penalty to attack rolls in bright light; SZ L (9' tall); ML 13; Int high (13); AL CE; XP 3,000; *MM*/215; glue-coated *shield +4, barbed harpoon +1, dagger +2* set with 500-gp pearl, potion of *invulnerability*.

Woolm, kuo-toa male F8: AC 2; MV 9, swim 18; hp 60; THAC0 12 (includes Strength bonus, 11 with *dagger +1*); #AT 3 (1 claw and 2 dagger strikes each round) or 1 (harpoon strike); Dmg 1d4+1 (claw), 1d4+2 (*dagger +1*) or 2d6+1 (barbed harpoon); SA/SD/SW see Goolp above; SZ L (8' tall); ML 13; Int high (13); AL CE; XP 1,400; *MM*/215; glue-coated *shield +2*, barbed harpoon, *dagger +1* set with 100-gp pearl, potion of *invulnerability*.

Blugmool, kuo-toa male P8: AC 0; MV 9, swim 18; hp 54; THAC0 16 (15 with *pincer staff +1*); #AT 1; Dmg special; SA pincer staff (grappled victim loses shield and Dexterity bonuses; 10% chance that both arms are trapped; 40% chance that one arm is trapped); SD spell absorption (granted by *rod*), *fire resistance* (bestowed by *ring*), +3 bonus to Enchantment/Charm spells (17 Wisdom), see Goolp above; SW see Goolp above; SZ L (8' tall); ML 13; Int exceptional (16); AL CE; XP 3,000; *MM*/215; *pincer staff +1, rod of absorption* (can absorb 24 more spell levels), *ring of fire resistance*.

Spells (5/5/4/2): 1st—*create water, cause fear, cause light wounds* (×2), *detect good*; 2nd—*aid* (×2), *hold person, resist fire* (×2); 3rd—*cause disease, continual darkness, prayer, water walk*; 4th—*reflecting pool, poison*.

Fishface, mongrelman male F6/T6: AC –4 (natural AC 5, 18 Dexterity, *cloak of the bat, ring of protection +3*); MV 9; hp 42; THAC0 15 (14 with *dagger of venom +1*); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (1d4+1 with *dagger of venom +1*); SA thief abilities; SD thief abilities, mimicry, camouflage; SZ M (5' tall); ML 12; Int very (11); AL CE; XP 2,000; *MM*/257; *cloak of the bat* (wearer is 90% invisible when stationary, transform into a bat and fly at MV 15 [B]; –2 bonus to AC), *ring of protection +3, dagger of venom +1* (contains six doses of Type F poison; injects poison on a natural roll of 20), *slippers of spider climbing*.

Thief abilities: PP 90%, OL 55%, F/RT 40%, MS 75%, HS 75%, DN 35%, CW 65%, RL 15%. Fishface inflicts triple damage with a successful backstab.

Kuo-toa males (10): AC 4; MV 9, swim 18; HD 2; hp 10 each; THAC0 19 (18 with Strength bonus); #AT 2; Dmg 1d4+2/1d4+1 (claw/dagger); SA +1 to attack and damage rolls (17 Strength); SD/SW see Goolp above; SZ M (6' tall); ML 13; Int high (13); AL CE; XP 175; *MM*/215; dagger, gluey shield.

Kuo-toa females (6): AC 5 (no shield); Dmg 1d4+1/1d4 (claw/dagger); SA none; other statistics same as males above.

Dwarf slaves (6): AC 10; MV 6; HD 1; hp 6 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SD +2 bonus to saving throws vs. magic and poison, 60' infravision; SZ M (4' tall); ML 13; Int very (11); AL LG; XP 175 (for rescue only); *MM*/94; footman's pick.

The dwarves belong to Clan Mithralstar and are named Skon, Myorn, Jolorgun, Olag, Suritor, and Gondal. They know this region of the Underdark well and can serve as guides once liberated.

Carrion crawlers (5): AC 3/7; MV 12; HD 3+1; hp 20 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1 or 8; Dmg 1d2 or special; SA paralysis; SZ L (9' long); ML 19; Int non (0); AL N; XP 420; *MM*/35.

Cave fishers (4): See area **2** for complete statistics.

5. Bainligor Camp.

Rising sharply out of the water between the troglodyte and kuo-toa camps is the domain of the bainligor, a race of wingless, subterranean bat-people. The great pillar of rock rises 100 feet and is topped with three angular buildings (areas **5A** and **5C**) and a large, stone, igloo-shaped structure (area **5B**). The bainligor have four cave fishers perched along the edge of their "island," trained to reel in fish with their adhesive traplines. The island had several more cave fishers at one time, but the bainligor killed most of them out of malice.

The deep dragons consider the bainligor unruly, and they have contemplated exterminating them. Their phenomenal jumping ability allows the bainligor to leap from their island to the lower islands nearby, and they occasionally raid the varkha, troglodytes, and kuo-toa in small packs. So far, the wise and elderly bainligor have kept the younger, more aggressive bainligor from invading the surrounding islands in force.

The bainligor rely on loud shrieks to communicate with one another, and their shrieks can be heard throughout the cavern. When a general alarm is sounded, the young, adult, and middle-aged bainligor perch on the edge of their island, listening for sounds of combat. Once they determine the location of the intruders, they head in that direction, using their jumping ability to leap onto nearby islands or hopping across the crystal disks. They cannot fly or leap onto islands that are higher, but they can climb.

5A. Quarters. These buildings once housed duergar psionicists brought to Khazefryn for mental training. Each structure contains eight 5'-long sarcophagus-like "beds" with lids that slide easily on tiny stone wheels.

Each building is normally inhabited by seven adult bainligor that use the covered beds for sleeping. The eighth sarcophagus holds the bainligors' amassed treasure:

- 2d20 pp, 4d20 gp, 5d20 sp, and 3d4 chunks of quartz crystal (worth 10 gp each).
- A silver necklace adorned gold fish and pieces of white moon coral (apparent value 1,500 gp). This is actually a *necklace of adaptation*. This item can only be found once.

5B. Dome of Silence. This stone dome contains a *permanent silence 15' radius* spell and was once used by the duergar for silent meditation and psionic exercises. The bainligor are frightened of the structure because the *silence* negates their echolocation, and thus they avoid it. PCs who withdraw into this building are not pursued by the bainligor.

The interior of the dome is illuminated by a *continual light* spell, and chiselled slate tiles cover the floor. The room is otherwise empty.

5C. Bainligor Den. This structure crawls with activity at all hours. The slate roof is adorned with ornamental, stone protrusions that serve as perches for young bainligor. The building—once a classroom for duergar psionicists—contains stone benches facing the open area in front of the door. Behind the rows of benches, against the north wall, stand six 12'-tall, obsidian statues of the duergar god Laduguer. Clutched in each statue's stony hands is a green crystal orb with a *continual light* spell cast inside it. Eerie green light fills the entire chamber.

This building is home to the young, middle-aged, and elderly bainligor. Fully half of them cling to rafters that crisscross the ceiling, while the others perch atop the benches. PCs searching the room after the bainligor have been defeated or driven away find a hideyhole under a loose bench. (Treat this as a secret door, although thieves can detect it with a successful Find Traps roll.) Hidden in the compartment are the following items:

- *Scroll of protection from electricity* in an adamantite scroll tube adorned with spider-like motifs. The tube is sealed and protected by a *fire trap* spell (cast at 9th level).
- Folded *scroll of protection from petrification* tucked inside a hollow platinum torc with removable, blue sapphire fittings on both ends (worth 4,500 gp).
- Cursed *ring of wizardry*. The *ring* doubles the number of 4th-level spells a wizard can prepare each day, but each time the *ring* is put on, the wearer must make a successful saving throw vs. spell or be *disintegrated* (as the *disintegrate* spell). If the wearer is *disintegrated*, the *ring* falls to the floor. The *ring* can be worn safely but first targeting it with a *wand of negation* or *dispel magic* spell (which negates its magic for 1d4 rounds), or by casting a *remove curse* spell on the wearer the round before the *ring* is put on.

Bainligor (49): AC 7; MV 6, jump 9, climb 3 (rough surfaces only); HD varies; hp varies; THAC0 varies; #AT 2; Dmg varies; SA stun (emit ultrasonic burst once per hour inflicts 1d6 points of damage per Hit Die of the bainligor; a target that fails a saving throw vs. paralyzation can do nothing other than defend itself and suffers a +2 penalty to AC and loses its Dexterity bonus for 1d4 rounds); SD dodge missiles, echolocation (unaffected by *darkness 15' radius, invisibility,* and *blindness* spells, and all visual illusions); SW blinded by *deafness* spells (–4 penalty to attack rolls); SZ varies; ML 6; Int very (11–12); AL NE; XP varies; *MCA4*/9.

Young bainligor (27): HD 2+1; hp 9 each; THAC0 19; Dmg 1d4/1d4; SZ S (3' tall); XP 270.

Adult bainligor (14): HD 4+3; hp 19 each; THAC0 15; Dmg 1d6/1d6; SZ M (4' tall); XP 650.

Middle-aged bainligor (5): HD 6+5; hp 29 each; THAC0 13; Dmg 1d6+1/1d6+1; SZ M (5' tall); XP 975.

Elderly bainligor (3): HD 8+7; hp 39 each; THAC0 11; Dmg 1d10/1d10; SZ M (6' tall); XP 2,000.

Cave fishers (4): See area **2** for complete statistics.

6. Stalactite's Lair.

The tallest pillar in Khazefryn appears to be occupied by drow but is actually ruled by the deep dragon Stalactite. The dragon is usually encountered as a strikingly beautiful female drow named Lydia. In this guise, she mediates disputes between the various camps and rules the drow while her brother counts coins in his lair (area **10**).

Stalactite is playful, manipulative, domineering, and short-tempered. In her drow guise, she insists on being called Lydia. The drow fear her more than Stalagmite because of her ever-shifting temperament and cruelty. They also admire her for the same reasons.

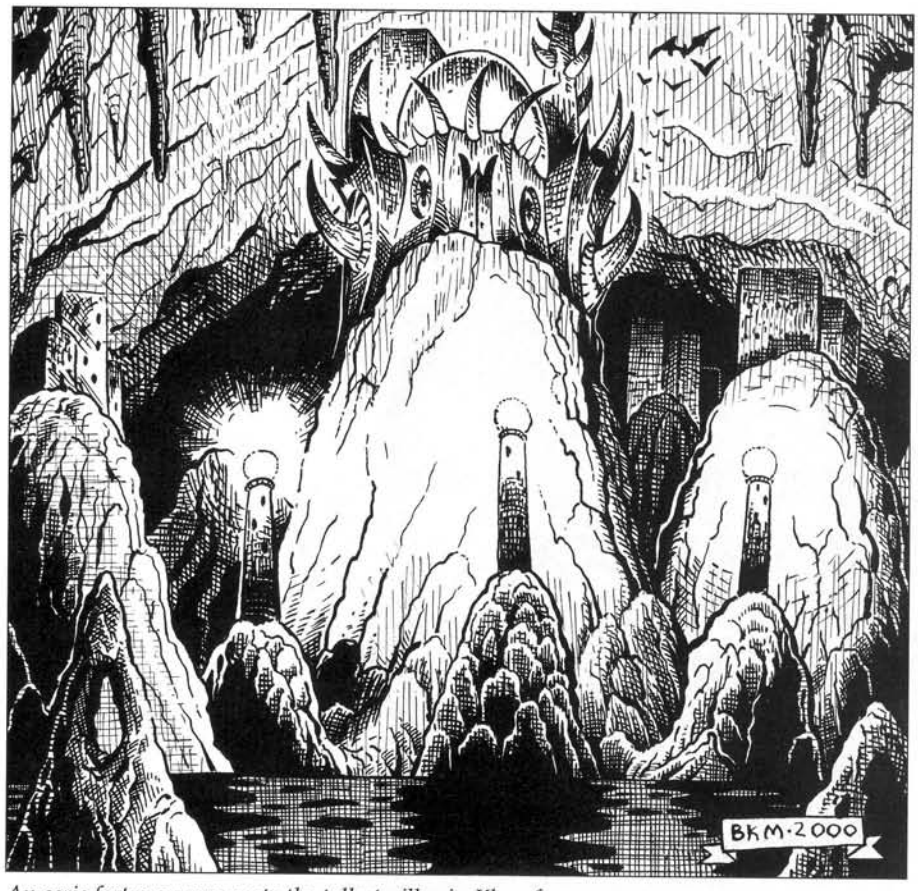
Stalactite keeps a drow consort named Szintran near her at all times. Although she doesn't need protection, she likes the idea of having a confidante. Szintran has proven himself an astute and able advisor, and "Lydia" has learned to trust his judgment.

If a general alarm is sounded, Stalactite orders Szintran to gather his forces and repel the threat. Szintran himself takes to the air using his *bat wings of flying*, drinks his potion of *improved invisibility*, and either shoots spell-casting foes with his *bolts of slaying* or swoops down to strike prey with his *longsword*. If Szintran dies, Stalactite assumes her true form and either blasts opponents with her breath weapon or tears them to shreds with her teeth and claws.

The buildings surmounting Stalactite's "island" are far more breathtaking than the other structures in Khazefryn. The central structure (areas **6A–C**) is encrusted with semi-precious stones and crystal lattices, and it once served as the main duergar fortress. West of the main complex is an ornately sculpted temple with a crystal-domed roof (area **6D**). Three spires (area **6E**) rise east of the main complex, *continual light* spells cast upon on their peaks.

6A. Main Hall. The walls of this structure are adorned with beautifully sculpted bas-reliefs of armed duergar warriors astride giant steeders (spiders). An obsidian statue of Laduguer stands in the middle of the hall, his arms raised to support the 20'-high ceiling. Set into Laduguer's eyes are two fist-sized emeralds worth 5,000 gp each.

Six 2nd-level drow guards stand watch here. If combat erupts in this chamber, the guards are joined next round by Szintran and "Lydia" (who emerge from area **6C**) and the six drow guards in area **6B**.



An eerie fortress surmounts the tallest pillar in Khazefryn.

6B. Meeting Room. This 15'-high chamber was once used as a meeting room by the duergar leaders of the monastery. Dominating the middle of the chamber is a rectangular obsidian table, 12 feet long and 3 feet wide, inlaid with semi-precious stones. (Prying out the stones yields 2,500 gp worth of gems.) Twelve ornately sculpted limestone chairs are positioned around the table, with a particularly elaborate chair placed at the far end. The backboards of each chair are carved with gargoylish frescoes.

Six off-duty 2nd-level drow guards are seated around the table. They respond to any alarm by grabbing their weapons and running to area **6A**.

6C. Lydia's Chamber. A throne comprised of mortared skulls stands against the west wall of this 20'-high, elongated, octagonal chamber. The throne, fashioned by the drow for Lydia, is skillfully wrought, hideous in design, and surprisingly comfortable.

Near the north wall stand two adamantite chests with spiderlike legs that enable the chests to "walk." The chests are attuned to Lydia, and she can command them at will. A wizard can force a chest to "walk" by casting *animate object* on it, but Lydia can override such commands. Each spider-chest has a movement rate of 12, AC 3, and 75 hit points. These spider-chests are golemlike creations but cannot attack.

Locked within the first spider-chest are the following treasures:

- 1,000 pp (loose).
- *Rod of terror* with 13 charges.
- A beautiful adamantite necklace with a spiderlike clasp clutching a small black pearl. Although worth 5,000 gp, this is actually a *necklace of strangulation*. It disintegrates when exposed to sunlight.
- A *scarab of enraging enemies* shaped like a black spider.
- Three crystal vials (worth 250 gp each). One crystal vial contains a potion of *extra-healing*; the other two contain Type F poison. The liquids in all three vials appear identical in color and texture.

Locked inside the second spider-chest are the following items:

- 1,000 pp (loose).
- A *ring of free action* made of adamantite

Lydia and Szintran make a deadly duo.

and adorned with weblike patterns. The ring, created by drow, disintegrates if exposed to direct sunlight.

- A 4"-diameter, expertly carved diamond spider (worth 5,000 gp) with a small rune chiselled into its head. The rune is a *symbol of death*; one or more creatures whose total hit points do not exceed 80 are slain by the rune upon reading it (no saving throw). Once the spell has been triggered, the rune vanishes forever.
- Eight clerical scrolls in sealed bone scroll tubes. The scrolls contain the spells *dispel magic, meld into stone, remove paralysis, neutralize poison, repel insects, air walk, flame strike,* and *earthquake* (all cast at 14th level of ability). Casting the *earthquake* spell on one of the cavern's "islands" causes it to collapse and plunge into the lake in a single round, burying 1d6 kopoacinths beneath the debris. Those trapped on the island suffer damage from the fall (1d6 points per 10 feet fallen).
- Three slim crystal vials (worth 250 gp each). One crystal vial combines the effects of a potion of *fire giant strength* with an *elixir of madness*; the second contains *oil of impact*; the third holds a cursed potion that permanently *polymorphs* the imbiber into an umber hulk, complete with its mentality and disposition. Only a *wish* spell can permanently restore the imbiber to his or her original form.

6D. Shrine of Lolth. Once a place of worship for the duergar, this structure has been converted to serve the children of Lolth, the drow. The 20'-high roof of this octagonal chamber is domed and carved from a single chunk of dark, translucent crystal. Floating in the middle of the room, just below the domed ceiling, is a *permanent spectral force* of a gigantic spider. The spider is hideous to behold but harmless and insubstantial. Positioned in the middle of the room, directly beneath the spider, is an obsidian altar carved with weblike motifs and topped with a large, spiderlike fresco of the goddess Lolth, her fanged mouth open wide. Blood stains the floor in front of the altar.

Every week, the drow offer Lolth a blood sacrifice; a victim is killed before the obsidian altar, and its blood is poured into the "mouth" of the altar. The victim's corpse is then thrown into the lake. Anyone who damages the altar incurs the Spider Queen's wrath and summons forth a *creeping doom* spell, which manifests as a deadly swarm of spiders emerging from the fresco's mouth. The carpetlike mass covers an area 20 feet around the altar, devouring every creature it touches. Only those protected against normal attacks (such as those protected by a potion of *invulnerability*) are immune to the swarm; otherwise there is no saving throw, and death is instantaneous.

The *creeping doom* expands to fill the chamber on the second round and persists for 130 rounds thereafter (as if cast at 33rd-level).

6E. Spider Towers. During the duergar occupation of Khazefryn, these 30'-tall spires contained magical teleporters attuned to a specific destinations within the duergar kingdom. When the duergar left Khazefryn, they dispelled the magic that enabled the teleporters to function.

Each of these web-filled towers is currently home to three egg-laying giant spiders (nine total). Near the top of each tower, suspended in the thick webs, is a large egg sack containing dozens of unborn spider hatchlings. Anyone attempting to reach the egg sack or set fire to the webs is attacked.

Stalactite (female adult deep dragon): AC –2; MV 12, fly 30 (C), burrow 6, swim 9; HD 16; hp 94; THAC0 5; #AT 3 + special; Dmg 3d4+6/3d4+6/3d8+6; SA breath weapon (50' long, 40'-wide, 30'-high cone of corrosive gas inflicting 12d8+6 points of damage; creatures with exposed skin suffer a –2 penalty to their saving throw), dragon fear (20 yards; those failing a saving throw vs. petrification at a +2 bonus suffer a –2 penalty to their attack and damage rolls), dragon special attack forms, spells (cast at 9th-level), assume snake and drow form each 3/day, constriction (snake form only); SD 120' infravision; *true seeing, free action,* and *detect magic* at will; resistant to heat and cold (–3 points per die damage, to a minimum of 1 hp per die); regenerates 1d4 hp every 6 rounds; MR 30% (immune to *sleep, charm,* and *hold* spells); SZ G (45' body, 42' tail); ML 17; Int exceptional (16); AL CE; XP 12,000; *MM*/82.

In her "Lydia" form, Stalactite employs a *wand of frost* (35 charges). A black sphere *ioun stone* orbiting her head enables her to see in magical *darkness*.

Spells (2/1): 1st—*charm person, read magic*; 2nd—*invisibility*.

Szintran, drow male F5 (Stalactite's consort): AC –5 (*drow chainmail +3, drow buckler +2*, 18 Dexterity); MV 12; hp 42; THAC0 16 (15 with *dagger +1*, 13 with *longsword +1*, 13 with *hand crossbow* plus Dex bonus); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA drow sleep poison, drow abilities; SD drow abilities; SW drow weaknesses; MR 60%; SZ M (5' tall); ML 14; Int high (13); AL CE; XP 4,000; *MM*/112; *drow chainmail +2, drow buckler +2, longsword +1 (+4 vs. dwarves), dagger +1, drow hand crossbow,* three *bolts of slaying* (wizards), *bat wings of flying,* potion of *improved invisibility* in a spider-shaped gold flask (worth 150 gp).

Spells (each usable once per day): *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic.*

Guards, drow males F2 (12): AC 2 (*drow chainmail +1, drow buckler +1*); MV 12; hp 13 each; THAC0 19 (18 with *dagger +1* or *short sword +1*); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA drow sleep poison, drow abilities; SD drow abilities; SW drow weaknesses; MR 54%; SZ M (5' tall); ML 14; Int high (13); AL CE; XP 975; *MM*/112; *drow chainmail +1, drow buckler +1, short sword +1, dagger +1.*

Spells (each usable once per day): *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness.*

Giant spiders (3 per tower, 9 total): AC 4; MV 9, web 12; HD 4+4; hp 36 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SA poison (Type F); SZ L (8' diameter); ML 13; Int low (7); AL CE; XP 975 (maximum hit points); *MM*/326.

7. Drow Camp.

The drow claim this "island" as their own. The natural stone pillar rises 100 feet above the lake and is topped with four unadorned, slate-roofed buildings. Clinging to the edges of the "island" are seven cave fishers that use their adhesive traplines to reel in fish from the dark water below.

Eight 2nd-level drow guards patrol the island at all times; the remaining guards are located in areas **7A–C**. Perched atop the roofs of the four buildings are sixteen giant flying spiders. The drow have trained their giant flying spiders to carry one rider apiece; thus, the drow are able to fly swiftly from one end of Khazefryn to the other.

If intruders are detected in the northern part of the cavern, Quelrysn and half of the drow warriors move to area **6** and defend that island against possible attack; the drow commander, Felynlochar, remains behind with the rest of her forces to hold this island and respond to possible threats elsewhere.

Felynlochar is the highest ranking drow in Khazefryn, and she has worked hard to earn the deep dragons' trust. (She is far from loyal, however, and would love to conquer Khazefryn in the name of Lolth.) Although Quelrysn has tried to allay her paranoia, Felynlochar feels her position threatened by Szintran, Stalactite's male consort, because his words influence the female dragon in ways she cannot. Felynlochar has tried to win the confidence of Stalagmite, but the male dragon challenges and disagrees with her on almost every matter, as if he were doing it merely out of spite.

Quelrysn loathes Szintran and the manner in which he has ingratiated himself to the female deep dragon. Although chaotic, he is loyal to Felynlochar and does everything short of sacrificing his own life to protect her.

Xulltyrr is a scheming and deceitful drow rogue. Although his talents prove useful on occasion, neither Felynlochar nor Quelrysn trust him. Unlike other drow in Khazefryn, Xulltyrr worships Vhaeraun, the drow god of thieves (a male deity opposed to Lolth). Thus he is shunned in Khazefryn, which he visits only when he needs a safe place to hide.

7A. Outhouse. Carved into the floor of this chamber are two holes. Waste unceremoniously dropped or poured into the holes eventually plunges into the lake below.

7B. Barracks. Two dozen uncomfortable stone beds covered with blankets of thick yellow moss dominate the room. Formerly a barracks for duergar soldiers, this building currently houses 18 male drow warriors: eight 2nd-level fighters, eight 3rd-level fighters, and Felynlochar's two 5th-level lieutenants.

When Xulltyrr visits Khazefryn, he rests or prays to Vhaeraun here.

7C. Barracks. This room contains eight stone beds covered with blankets of thick yellow moss and houses the female drow warriors: eight 4th-level fighters.

7D. Leaders' Barracks. Drow warriors have little use for fancy decor, but Felynlochar maintains a small shrine in the northwest corner of this room. The shrine consists of little more than a spider-shaped obsidian table surmounted by a 12"-tall adamantite statuette of the goddess Lolth in drow form. Any drow priestess of 9th level or higher can use the statuette to cast *commune* once per week; any attempt to call upon its power more than once per week risks Lolth's disfavor. The statuette is worth 6,000 gp for the materials and craftsmanship alone and weighs 10 lbs.

Aside from the shrine, this room contains four black, basalt beds covered with golden moss and a pair of lit braziers fashioned from silver and molded to resemble entwined spiders (worth 2,000 gp each).

Under normal conditions, this room is occupied by Felynlochar and Quelrysn. There is a 50% chance that Felynlochar is practicing swordplay with one of the female guards from area **7C**; otherwise she is meditating before the shrine. There is a 75% chance that Quelrysn is reading his spellbook.

Felynlochar, drow female F8: AC –5 (*drow chainmail +5, drow buckler +3*, 15 Dexterity); MV 12; hp 60; THAC0 13 (9 with *short sword +4*, 10 with *hand crossbow of accuracy*); #AT 3/2 (*short sword +4*) or 1 (*hand crossbow*); Dmg by weapon type; SA drow sleep poison, drow abilities; SD drow abilities; SW drow weaknesses; MR 66%; SZ M (5' tall); ML 16; Int high (13); AL CE; XP 7,000; *MM*/112; *drow chainmail +5, drow buckler +3, short sword +4, drow hand crossbow of accuracy +3*, obsidian spider brooch with eight small diamonds for eyes (worth 5,000 gp).

Drow Poison

Many drow carry hand crossbows that shoot darts up to 60 yards. The darts inflict only 1d3 points of damage, but dark elves commonly coat them with poison that renders the victim unconscious unless he or she makes a successful saving throw vs. poison with a –4 penalty. The effects of the poison last 2d4 hours.

Captured!

PCs captured by the drow are bound with web "ropes" (either spun by the giant spiders in area **6** or the spiderstone golem in area **8**). Breaking free of these tight bonds requires a successful Bend Bars/Lift Gates roll at a –30% penalty. (Thus, PCs with less than 18/76 Strength cannot break free without assistance.) PCs with the Rope Use proficiency who make a successful proficiency check at a –8 penalty can slip free of the web bonds.

Captured PCs are brought before "Lydia" in area **6C**. To reward the drow, the deep dragon allows her consort Szintran to choose one captive as a blood sacrifice; that PC is then hauled to the Shrine of Lolth (area **6D**) and placed under guard until the ritual. Felynlochar oversees the proceedings as Szintran and "Lydia" watch on. The remaining PCs are detained in the drow camp (area **7**) until they can be hauled away and sold to Underdark slavers. These might be derro, minions of an aboleth, illithids, a deranged death tyrant, or something equally vile. If the DM is running this adventure in conjunction with "Kingdom of the Ghouls" (Issue #70), the captive PCs could be sold to Doresain the Ghoul King and taken to the subterranean city of Kilenor to nourish the undead masses.

Spells (each usable once per day): *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic.*

Quelrysn, drow male F7/W6: AC –1 (*drow chainmail +2, ring of protection +2,* 16 Dexterity); MV 12; hp 47; THAC0 14 (12 with *dagger +2*); #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; SA/SD drow abilities; SW drow weaknesses; MR 64%; SZ M (5' tall); ML 14; Int genius (17); AL CE; XP 10,000; *MM*/112; *drow chainmail +2, drow dagger +2, ring of protection +2, wand of darkness* (39 charges), spellbook bound between adamantite covers with platinum clasps (a spiderlike emblem on the cover is enchanted with a *sepia snake sigil*).

The *wand of darkness* has the following functions: *darkness 15' radius* (1 charge), negates *protection from evil* (2 charges), *summon nightmare* (3 charges), *animate dead* (4 charges), *summon shadow* (4 charges).

Spells (each usable once per day): *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic.*

Wizard spells (4/3/2/1): 1st—*change self, gaze reflection, magic missile* (×2); 2nd—*blindness, blur, invisibility;* 3rd—*dispel magic, lightning bolt;* 4th—*dimension door.*

Xulltyrr, drow male T8: AC 4 (*ring of protection +2,* 18 Dexterity); MV 12; hp 25; THAC0 17 (14 with *drow dagger +3*); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA drow sleep poison, drow abilities; SD drow abilities, *cloak of arachnida* (see *DMG*); SW drow weaknesses; MR 66%; SZ M (5' tall); ML 12; Int high (13); AL CE; XP 8,000; *MM*/112; *drow cloak of arachnida, ring of protection +2, drow dagger +3, amulet of proof against detection and location.*

Spells (each usable once per day): *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic.*

Lieutenants, drow males F5 (2): AC –4 (*drow chainmail +2, drow buckler +2,* 18 Dexterity); MV 12; hp 32 each; THAC0 16 (15 with *dagger +1,* 13 with *short sword +3,* 13 with *hand crossbow* plus Dex bonus); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA drow sleep poison, drow abilities; SD drow abilities; SW drow weaknesses; MR 60%; SZ M (5' tall); ML 14; Int high (13); AL CE; XP 4,000; *MM*/112; *drow chainmail +2, drow buckler +2, short sword +3, dagger +1, drow hand crossbow.*

Spells: Same as Xulltyrr above.

Guards, drow females F4 (8): AC 1 (drow *chainmail +1, drow buckler +1,* 15 Dexterity); MV 12; hp 25 each; THAC0 17 (16 with *short sword +1, dagger +1,* or *hand crossbow*); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA drow sleep poison, drow abilities; SD drow abilities; SW drow weaknesses; MR 58%; SZ M (5' tall); ML 14; Int high (13); AL CE; XP 3,000; *MM*/112; *drow chainmail +1, drow buckler +1, short sword +1, dagger +1, drow hand crossbow.*

Spells (each usable once per day): *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness.*

Guards, drow males F3 (8): AC 0 (*drow chainmail +1, drow buckler +1,* 16 Dexterity); MV 12; hp 19 each; THAC0 18 (17 with *dagger +1* or *short sword +1,* 16 with *drow hand crossbow*); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA drow sleep poison, drow abilities; SD drow abilities; SW drow weaknesses; MR 56%; SZ M (5' tall); ML 14; Int high (13); AL CE; XP 2,000; *MM*/112; *drow chainmail +1, drow buckler +1, short sword +1, dagger +1, drow hand crossbow.*

Spells (each usable once per day): *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness.*

Guards, drow males F2 (16): See area **6** for complete statistics.

Giant flying spiders (16): AC 4; MV 9, fly 9 (D); HD 3+3; hp 15 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SA poison (Type A; +2 bonus to saving throws), leap up to 70 feet horizontally; SD fall any distance without harm; SZ L (8' diameter); ML 13; Int low (6); AL CE; XP 650; *MM*/326.

Cave fishers (7): See area **2** for complete statistics.

8. South Gate.

Carved out of the cavern wall, this structure consists of a main chamber and two guard rooms. A portcullis blocks off a 20'-wide tunnel heading south. The iron portcullis is otherwise identical to the gate in area **1**.

The South Gate is defended by servants of the drow: a clan of quaggoths, their six giant spider pets, and a spiderstone golem under Quelrysn's control. The quaggoths have orders not to let anyone through the gate. If intruders are detected heading toward the portcullis from the south, one of the quaggoths steps out onto the precipice overlooking the main cavern and blows a silver horn, alerting the drow in area **7**. One round later, Quelrysn uses a *dimension door* spell to appear inside the gatehouse. He casts *know alignment* and *detect magic* upon the visitors before interrogating them. His response depends on what he learns:

- If one or more of the visitors are good-aligned but the group as a whole doesn't seem that threatening or well equipped, he orders the quaggoths to raise the portcullis. Once the visitors are inside, he orders the portcullis dropped and commands the golem and the quaggoths to attack.
- If one or more of the visitors is good-aligned but the group as a whole seems too powerful to defeat easily, Quelrysn denies passage and orders the golem and quaggoths to attack anyone who successfully circumvents the portcullis.
- If none of the visitors are good-aligned, Quelrysn grants them safe entry once he's convinced that they have come for business, safe passage through Khazefryn, or some other harmless purpose. In this case, he demands an entry fee of no less than 500 gp in treasure or magic items per visitor.

If combat erupts at the South Gate, Quelrysn commands the golem and quaggoths to attack while he retreats to area **7**. Barring the use of *silence* spells, any combat inside the gatehouse alerts the drow in area **7**. Felynlochar sends a force of eight 2nd-level warriors, four 3rd-level warriors, and a 5th-level lieutenant to quell the threat.

8A. The Spiders' Parlor. Clinging to the web-strung ceiling of this unlit chamber, hidden in the darkness, are six giant spiders. The spiders' quaggoth handlers pace around the chamber, periodically testing one another in mock combat.

Standing in the middle of the room and facing the south passage is Quelrysn's spiderstone golem. When it sees intruders approaching within 60 feet of the gate, it points one of its arms toward the gate; this alerts the quaggoths and the spiders to the approach of intruders. The golem is not affected by illusions and can clearly see invisible interlopers.

The iron winch for the portcullis is built into the east wall. Turning the crank requires a successful Bend Bars/Lift Gates roll with no penalty.

8B. Guard Rooms. Each of these unlit chambers houses nine quaggoth guards. The rooms are filthy and filled with quaggoth droppings. The quaggoths have no treasure.

Spiderstone golem: AC 3; MV 9; HD 11; hp 55; THAC0 9; #AT 4; Dmg 1d12 (×4); SA web spit (attack roll required; 90-yard range; target does not receive a saving throw, but other creatures within 20 feet are entitled to a roll to avoid becoming entangled); SD +1 or better weapons to hit, *spider climb,* immune to all spells except Invocation/Evocation spells and those cast by drow priests; MR 50%; SZ L (7' tall); ML 20; Int non (0); AL CE; XP 8,000; *MCA1.*

The obsidian golem resembles a tall, four-armed drow and obeys only Quelrysn's commands. However, there's a cumulative 2% chance per round of continuous combat that the golem goes insane and attacks everything in sight until destroyed.

Quaggoth guards (18): AC 6; MV 12; HD 2+2; hp 12 each; THAC0 19; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1d4/1d4 (claws) or 1d8 (stone ax); SA berserk rage (if reduced to 3 hp or fewer, the quaggoth gains a +2 bonus to its attack and damage rolls); SD immune to poison; SZ L (8' tall); ML 16; Int low (7); AL N; XP 175; *MM*/298.

Quaggoth spider handlers (6): HD 3+3; hp 17 each; THAC0 17; XP 270; other statistics same as above.

One quaggoth handler is assigned to look after each giant spider; the drow view these

spiders as emissaries of Lolth and put to death any quaggoth whose spider is slain in battle.

Giant spiders (6): See area **6** for complete statistics.

9. Dragons' Retreat.

Using a *stone of controlling earth elementals* given to them by Stalagmite (and later returned to the dragon), the drow excavated this passage connecting the dragons' cavern (area **10**) with the southern passage leading to the rest of the Underdark; the dragons use this tunnel as an escape route in case they are attacked by a superior force.

The serpentine passage is roughly hewn and tubular, measuring 9 feet in diameter. It also rises and falls as indicated on the map.

9A. Secret Door. The secret door leading to the dragons' secret tunnel is expertly crafted. Elves have no chance of casually detecting the door and a 1-in-6 chance of finding it if the wall is searched carefully. Dwarves have a 1-in-8 chance of finding the secret door with a careful search; other races have a 1-in-10 chance. The door is circular and rolls easily into the adjacent wall.

9B. Dragons' Cyst. Carved into the side of the tunnel is a roughly circular chamber. A lurker clings to the 15'-high, smoothly hewn ceiling, waiting to descend on the first victim to enter. PCs have a 10% chance of spotting the lurker without actually prodding the ceiling. When it drops, it imposes a –4 penalty to opponents' surprise rolls. The drow have treated the lurker's outer skin with an magical resin that improves its Armor Class.

The cyst contains some of the dragons' treasure, which is piled at the back of the cave:

- 12,300 cp, 9,800 sp, 4,500 ep, 4,200 gp, and 560 pp (loose).
- 152 assorted gemstones (worth 45 × 10 gp, 34 × 50 gp, 30 × 100 gp, 19 × 250 gp, 11 × 500 gp, 8 × 1,000 gp, and 5 × 5,000 gp respectively), with a total value of 48,400 gp.
- Three *longswords +1*, two *short swords +1*, *footman's flail +2*, *composite longbow +2*, *javelin of piercing*, and *warhammer of dancing +2*.
- An iron golem's head that opens its eyes whenever a living creature approaches with 5 feet. The head is harmless and cannot communicate in any way.
- The 5'-high, 6'-long shell of a deceased gohlbrorn bulette, hidden under which is a suit of *chainmail +3*, suit of *platemail +2*, suit of black *studded leather armor +1*, *shield +2* emblazoned with the symbol of Hextor, and a *helm of underwater action* adorned with fishlike fins.

9C. Stalagmite's Hoard. This 50'-high cavern slopes down gradually toward the east. A 30'-wide, 30'-high archway carved to resemble a gaping maw leads to the main cavern of the dragons' lair (area **10**). Assuming Stalagmite is still alive, PCs can hear the dragon's snorts and shifting bulk in this cavern.

Ropers guard the deep dragon's hoard, attacking all who venture too near.

Six 9'-tall stalagmites rise from the floor near the middle of the cavern. Piled between these jagged pillars of stone are the dragons' most prized treasures, detailed below. The six "stalagmites" are actually three ropers and three killer mimics. These creatures were lured to Khazefryn by the drow to guard the dragons' riches. The alternately positioned ropers and mimics surround the hoard. While the ropers can reach anyone in the cavern with their pseudopods, the mimics attack only those who try to reach the treasure.

Stalagmite's and Stalactite's treasure consists of the following:

- Sixteen open wooden chests, each holding 1,500 gp (for a total of 24,000 gp).
- A *wizard locked*, 3' × 2' × 2' lead chest containing a golden, ruby-studded tiara (worth 9,000 gp) and matching scepter (12,000 gp) on a bed of 900 pp.

• A lead chest identical to the one above containing 250 assorted gemstones (200 × 500 gp and 50 × 1,000 gp respectively), with a total value of 150,000 gp. Buried under the gems is a small chunk of brown quartz crystal that radiates Conjuration magic; this is actually a *stone of controlling earth elementals*.

• A 2' × 3' × 1' oak chest bound with iron containing a golden gargoyle mask with black opal eyes (worth 6,000 gp), a silver *medallion of thought projection* shaped like an illithid's skull fastened to a *necklace of prayer beads* (with 1d4+2 special beads), and an elegant blue crystal karafe (worth 3,500 gp) containing red, demonclaw wine. Any non-chaotic evil creature who drinks the wine is transformed into a dretch tanar'ri, becoming one in all respects. (The transformation is excruciating, and a successful System Shock roll is required to survive.) Those who are forced to quaff the elixir are entitled to a saving throw vs. poison to resist the transformation, with success indicating 5d12 points of damage instead.

• A bronze *horn of Valhalla* that summons 2d4 neutral good 4th-level fighters. If the horn is blown by an individual or creature of evil alignment, the warriors attack instead of obey the horn's blower.

• An ovoid, egg-shaped trunk carved from a single piece of black quartz, mounted atop an iron stand with three claw-shaped legs. The hemispherical lid rises by levitation when touched, revealing the contents within: a *rod of smiting* with 30 charges wrapped in a *robe of stars*, and a silver-clasped book with gray leather covers and dog-eared yellow pages (actually a *tome of understanding*).

• A *bastard sword +3, frost brand* named Remorhaz (AL CN; Intelligence 13, Ego 10; communicates vis empathy; grants protection as if the wielder were wearing a *ring of fire resistance*; detects secret doors in a 5' radius; wielder can cast *ice storm* once/day as a 12th-level wizard).

• Any specific stolen item or *objet d'art* the PCs might be looking for (as detailed in the "Setting the Stage" section).

Ropers (3): AC 0; MV 3; HD 12; hp 70 each; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 5d4 or special; SA strands (shoot one strand/round; six strands total), Strength drain (each time a strand hits, the victim must make a successful saving throw vs. poison or lose half his Strength; drain occurs after 1d3 rounds and lasts 2d4 turns); SD immune to lightning, suffer half damage from cold-based attacks; SW –4 penalties to saving throws vs. fire; MR 80%; SZ L (9' tall); ML 15; Int exceptional (15); AL CE; XP 12,000; *MM*/304.

Killer mimics (3): AC 7; MV 3; HD 10; hp 49 each; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 3d4; SA glue; SD camouflage; SZ L (9' tall); ML 13; Int semi (4); AL NE; XP 3,000; *MM*/250.

Lurker: AC 2 (6); MV 1, fly 9 (B); HD 10; hp 66; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (constriction); SA ambush (–4 penalty to opponents' surprise rolls), suffocation (enwrapped victim dies in 1d4+1 rounds); SZ H (20' diameter); ML 11; Int non (0); AL N; XP 2,000; *MM*/229.

10. Stalagmite's Lair.

Stalagmite dwells in this monstrous cavern overlooking Khazefryn. Unlike his sister, Stalagmite prefers to remain in dragon form, fully enjoying the terror he instills in smaller creatures.

Stalagmite's great form fills much of the 60'-high cavern, but there's still plenty of room for him to spread his wings and prowl about. He spends idle hours gazing down upon the rest of Khazefryn, studying some small bauble in his "collection," or mumbling to himself. Once each day, he is visited by Stalactite or one of her drow emissaries, and Felynlochar has been known to confer with him on rare occasion.

Stalagmite is bold and haughty, accepting any challenge (whether a challenge of wits or strength). He is not averse to cutting deals with those who prove themselves his intellectual or physical equal, and he's generally more even-tempered than his sister. He has no love of thieves, however, and does not tolerate their presence for long.

Aside from the dragon himself and the scattered or crushed bones of numerous foes who saw fit to challenge him, this cavern is devoid of items of interest.

The 30'-wide, 40' high mouth of the cavern overlooking Khazefryn stretches almost up to the ceiling. When a general alarm is raised, Stalagmite pokes his head out through the mouth of his cave to see what's happening, breathing corrosive gas at anyone who comes within 50 feet. He enjoys watching a battle unfold before his eyes, participating only when he or his sister is threatened directly or when all could be lost.

Note that Stalagmite's *ioun stones* provide numerous forms of added protection, including protection from rear attacks and 1st- to 4th-level spells.

Stalagmite (male adult deep dragon): AC –5; MV 12, fly 30 (C), burrow 6, swim 9; HD 16; hp 98; THAC0 5; #AT 3 + special; Dmg 3d4+6/3d4+6/3d8+6; SA breath weapon (50' long, 40'-wide, 30'-high cone of corrosive gas inflicting 12d8+6 points of damage; creatures with exposed skin suffer a –2 penalty to their saving throw), dragon fear (20 yards; those failing a saving throw vs. petrification at a +2 bonus suffer a –2 penalty to their attack and damage rolls), dragon special attack forms, spells (cast at 9th-level), assume snake and drow form each 3/day, constriction (snake form only); SD 120' infravision; *true seeing, free action*, and *detect magic* at will; resistant to heat and cold (–3 points per die damage, to a minimum of 1 hp per die); regenerates 1d4 hp every 6 rounds; MR 45% (immune to *sleep, charm*, and *hold* spells); SZ G (45' body, 42' tail); ML 17; Int exceptional (16); AL CE; XP 12,000; *MM*/82.

Stalagmite employs several magical items recovered from his hoard, including:

• A *wand of paralyzation* (10 charges).

• A magical scroll etched with three spells cast at 18th level: *chaos, chain lightning*, and *Mordenkainen's sword*.

• Six *ioun stones*: three clear spheres (each grants 5% magic resistance), a silver sphere (negates rear-attack bonuses against the user from any source), and two pale lavender ellipsoids (each absorbs 1st- to 4th-level spells, 6 levels and 30 levels respectively).

• *Ring of protection +3* (bonus applies to Armor Class only).

Spells (2/1): 1st—*read magic, taunt*; 2nd—*web*.

Concluding the Adventure

Stalactite and Stalagmite are always open to deals that improve their influence or increase their wealth, and they have learned to be cautious around powerful adventurers (having had several "close calls" in the past). The DM should play both dragons as astute observers, calculating negotiators, and fierce survivors. However, they cannot be bullied and respond to threats with brute force.

If the PCs slay one of the deep dragons, the other does its utmost to track them down. The surviving dragon sends a large force of drow (led by either Felynlochar or Szintran) to bring back the PCs' heads on an adamantite platter. If the drow fail to accomplish this task, the surviving dragon might try to enlist the aid of evil forces outside Khazefryn (perhaps striking a deal with a remote illithid, derro, or kuo-toa outpost). The dragon might even hire some dwarven mercenaries to gather information on the party's whereabouts in exchange for a sizable trove of riches. The incensed deep dragon does not rest until its sibling's slayers are themselves destroyed.

If both dragons are slain, the drow try to exert control over Khazefryn's remaining population. Felynlochar or her replacement sends a task force to the nearest drow enclave to bring reinforcements. While the troglodytes and varkha agree to serve the drow, the bainligor refuse to yield, and battle erupts. The kuo-toa, unwilling to become slaves to the drow, attempt to leave Khazefryn. The greater dopplegangers use the ensuing chaos to infiltrate the troglodytes, seize control of the kuo-toan island, and possibly "replace" one or more drow officers. Ω

Combined Creature Roster

Area	Creature	AC	HD	hp	THAC0	#AT	Damage/Attack	SA	SD	MR	XPs
—	Vurgens	4	8+8	52	11	1	2d6 or 3d4	Yes	No	Nil	5,000
	Kopoacinth (24)	5	4+4	23	15	4	1d3/1d3/1d6/1d4	No	Yes	Nil	10,080
1A	Subterranean lizards (3)	5	6	42	15	1	2d6	Yes	Yes	Nil	1,950
	Blindheims (16)	3	4+2	20	17	1	1d8	Yes	Yes	Nil	4,320
1B	Drok, fomorian giant	3	13+3	89	9	1	2d6+8 or 2d4+8	No	Yes	Nil	6,000
2	Cave fishers (8)	4	3	15	17	2	2d4/2d4	Yes	Yes	Nil	1,400
2A	Varkhas (48)	6	1	5	19	2 or 1	1d6/1d6 or 1d6	No	No	Nil	1,680
2B	Greater dopplegangers (4)	2	9	47	11	2	1d12/1d12	Yes	Yes	Nil	16,000
	Sebbith, varkha shaman	6	2	9	20	2	1d6/1d6	Yes	Yes	Nil	65
	Varkha slliths (3)	6	2	10	19	2 or 1	1d6/1d6 or 1d6	No	No	Nil	195
3A	Troglodytes (24)	5	2	9	19/16	3 or 1	1d2/1d2/1d4+1 or 2d4	Yes	Yes	Nil	4,200
3C	Vthek, troglodyte chief	5	6	35	15/12	5 or 2	1d4+5 (×4)/1d4+2 or 2d4+5/2d4+5	Yes	Yes	Nil	650
	Troglodytes (12)	5	2	9	19/16	3 or 1	1d2/1d2/1d4+1 or 2d4	Yes	Yes	Nil	2,400
3D	Hook horrors (8)	3	5	24	15	3	1d8/1d8/2d6	No	No	Nil	1,400
4	Cave fishers (4)	4	3	15	17	2	2d4/2d4	Yes	Yes	Nil	700
4A	Kuo-toa males (10)	4	2	10	19/18	2	1d4+2/1d4+1	Yes	Yes	Nil	1,750
	Kuo-toa females (6)	5	2	10	19	2	1d4+1/1d4	No	Yes	Nil	1,050
4B	Dwarves (6)	10	1	6	20	1	1d6+1	No	Yes	Nil	1,050
4C	Carrion crawlers (5)	3/7	3+1	20	17	1 or 8	1d2 or special	Yes	No	Nil	2,100
	Goolp, kuo-toa F10	0	10	77	10/9/8	3 or 1	1d4+3/1d4+4/1d4+4 or 2d6+4	Yes	Yes	Nil	3,000
	Woolm, kuo-toa F8	2	8	60	12/11	3 or 1	1d4+1/1d4+2 or 2d6+1	Yes	Yes	Nil	1,400
	Blugmool, kuo-toa P8	0	8	54	16/15	1	special	Yes	Yes	Nil	3,000
	Mongrelman F6/T6	–4	6/6	42	15/14	1	1d4+1	Yes	Yes	Nil	2,000
5	Cave fishers (4)	4	3	15	17	2	2d4/2d4	Yes	Yes	Nil	700
5A	Adult bainligor (14)	7	4+3	19	15	2	1d6/1d6	Yes	Yes	Nil	9,100
5C	Young bainligor (27)	7	2+1	9	19	2	1d4/1d4	Yes	Yes	Nil	7,290
	Middle-aged bainligor (5)	7	6+5	29	13	2	1d6+1/1d6+1	Yes	Yes	Nil	4,875
	Elderly bainligor (3)	7	8+7	39	11	2	1d10/1d10	Yes	Yes	Nil	6,000
6A	Male drow F2 (6)	2	2	13	19/18	1	1d4+1 or 1d6+1	Yes	Yes	54%	5,850
6B	Male drow F2 (6)	2	2	13	19/18	1	1d4+1 or 1d6+1	Yes	Yes	54%	5,850
6C	Stalactite, deep dragon	–2	16	94	5	3 or 1	3d4+6/3d4+6/3d8+6 or 12d8+6 (breath)	Yes	Yes	30%	12,000
	Szintran, male drow F5	–5	5	42	16/15/13	1	1d8+1 or 1d4+1	Yes	Yes	60%	4,000
6E	Giant spiders (9)	4	4+4	36	15	1	1d8	Yes	No	Nil	8,775
7	Male drow F2 (8)	2	2	13	19/18	1	1d4+1 or 1d6+1	Yes	Yes	54%	7,800
	Giant flying spiders (16)	4	3+3	15	17	1	1d8	Yes	Yes	Nil	10,400
	Cave fishers (7)	4	3	15	17	2	2d4/2d4	Yes	Yes	Nil	1,225
7B	Male drow F2 (8)	2	2	13	19/18	1	1d4+1 or 1d6+1	Yes	Yes	54%	7,800
	Male drow F3 (8)	0	3	19	18/17	1	1d4+1 or 1d6+1	Yes	Yes	56%	16,000
	Male drow F5 (2)	–4	5	32	16/15/13	1	1d4+1 or 1d6+3	Yes	Yes	60%	8,000
	Xulltyrr, male drow T8	4	8	25	17/14	1	1d4+3	Yes	Yes	66%	8,000
7C	Female drow F4 (8)	1	4	25	17/16	1	1d4+1 or 1d6+1	Yes	Yes	58%	24,000
7D	Felynlochar, female drow F8	–5	8	60	13/10/9	3/2	1d6+4 or 1d4+1	Yes	Yes	66%	7,000
	Quelrysn, male drow F7/W6	–1	7/6	47	14/12	3/2	1d4+2	Yes	Yes	64%	10,000
8A	Spiderstone golem	3	11	55	9	4	1d12/1d12/1d12/1d12	Yes	Yes	50%	8,000
	Quaggoth handlers (6)	6	3+3	17	17	2 or 1	1d4/1d4 or 1d8	Yes	Yes	Nil	1,620
	Giant spiders (6)	4	4+4	36	15	1	1d8	Yes	No	Nil	5,850
8B	Quaggoth guards (18)	6	2+2	12	19	2 or 1	1d4/1d4 or 1d8	Yes	Yes	Nil	3,150
9B	Lurker	2/6	10	66	11	1	1d6	Yes	No	Nil	2,000
9C	Ropers (3)	0	12	70	9	1	5d4 or special	Yes	Yes	80%	36,000
	Killer mimics (3)	7	10	49	11	1	3d4	Yes	Yes	Nil	9,000
10	Stalagmite, deep dragon	–5	16	98	5	3 or 1	3d4+6/3d4+6/3d8+6 or 12d8+6 (breath)	Yes	Yes	45%	12,000

An interrogation takes a turn for the worse.

SKULKING BELOW

BY DARREN DARE

What you don't see can kill you

Artwork by Michael Collins
Cartography by Chris Perkins

Darren is 35 years old and lives in Pierrefonds, Québec (near Montréal). He's been playing the AD&D® game for about twenty years and DMing about half that time. This is his first published adventure.

"Skulking Below" is an AD&D adventure designed for 3–6 characters of levels 1–2 (about 6 total levels). It takes place within a city's sewer system, so DMs can fit the adventure easily into any campaign world.

Although any combination of character classes is suitable for this adventure, a thief would be especially beneficial.

Adventure Background

For years, the local thieves' guild has been secretly operating under the nose of the City Watch. Most of the thefts and other covert acts taking place within the city have been performed in such a way as to blame unaffiliated thieves and ruffians—until now.

Lately, members of the City Watch have been putting the squeeze on their network of informants and snitches, and they are slowly closing in on what they believe might be the guild's headquarters. The sly guildmaster, through his own network of spies, has already learned of the City Watch's suspicions and knows them to be erroneous. The authorities are concentrating their efforts in the wrong district, far from the guild's true location. Nevertheless, the guildmaster is worried. The addition of more City Watch patrols has hampered guild activities, and this has started to impact the guild's coffers.

Through the guild's network of spies, the guildmaster has learned of a small group of skulks living in the sewers below the Dock Ward. These skulks have been responsible for many freelance "hits" in the area. They have not paid the guild its customary "cut," and the guildmaster believes that their sloppy attacks and robberies are the reasons why the City Watch is taking such an active part in searching them out. The guildmaster has decided that instead of having the skulks destroyed, the guild will use this group of thieving creatures to take the fall for them. Since the City Watch is already convinced that the guild is located in that part of the city anyway, the guildmaster wants to ensure that the guards stumble upon the skulk's lair.

Recently, the guildmaster sent one of his agents to meet with the leader of the skulks. This agent, a doppleganger named Vicissis, is assigned to recruit the skulks and offer them a place within the guild. This, of course, is a ruse. Vicissis has orders to help the skulks make more organized and daring heists and muggings. Then, when the City Watch is convinced that their quarry is close at hand, his orders are to lead the Watch right to the lair,

ensuring the skulks' destruction. The skulks will take the blame for recent robberies, the City Watch will be satisfied that they have destroyed the guild, and the guild will collect a cut of the skulks' booty until then.

For about ten days, the skulks have been concentrating their attacks within the streets and alleys of the Dock Ward. There, they lure unsuspecting victims into dark alleyways to rob them of their possessions, leaving the victims unconscious or dead in the gutter.

For the Dungeon Master

The adventure begins when the PCs are hired by the City Watch to investigate the recent rash of muggings in the Dock Ward area of the city. They are asked to enter the sewers in that area and destroy any possible lair that the thieves might be using as a base.

The PCs can keep any treasure that they find during their search as well as a 200 gp reward from the City Watch if they discover any information leading to the arrest and arraignment of the guildmaster.

Once the PCs enter the Dock Ward, they can snoop around anywhere they like. Large, rusted padlocks lock the sewer grates. If they request a key from the local militia, they can open the grate easily; otherwise, a successful Open Locks roll is required to unlock it.

Before they enter the sewers, the PCs stumble upon a beaten and barely alive merchant in an alley. Should the PCs help the man by casting a *cure light wounds* spell or making a successful Healing proficiency check, he tells them that he was just attacked by a group of gray-skinned creatures who robbed him of three gems. Moments ago, the creatures scattered at the sound of the approaching PCs and left the man to die. They headed farther into the alley and disappeared into the darkness.

If the PCs see to the merchant's wounds and aid him further, he offers them 250 gp for the safe return of his stolen gems.

The PCs can attempt to track the skulks. Rangers suffer a –4 penalty to their Tracking proficiency checks; other PCs suffer a –8 penalty to their proficiency checks.

At the far end of the alley the PCs spot a 6'-diameter iron sewer grate. The lock of this grate is missing, and anyone examining the grate detects a small smear of blood. The grate can be opened by anyone with a Strength of 12 or better and reveals a stone shaft descending into the darkness below. Metal rungs have been imbedded into the wall of one side of the shaft as a ladder. These rungs descend 40 feet to the sewers. The second rung from the bottom is loose and comes out of the wall if any weight is placed on it. The first PC stepping upon this rung must make a Dexterity check to avoid falling onto the stone walkway below, suffering 1 point of damage.

The Sewers

PCs who descend into the sewers find themselves upon a narrow walkway mere inches above the surface of the water. The sewer tunnel travels north and south. The 20'-wide, vaulted tunnel is flanked by two 3'-wide walkways. The entire area is damp and dark, and PCs need some form of artificial light source if they venture more than 10 feet away from the shaft that leads to the surface.

Read the following to the PCs as they descend onto the walkway:

> The stone shaft descends to a narrow walkway covered with puddles of dark water and sludge. The sewer is dark and damp. The tunnel is wide, perhaps some 20 feet across with a 3'-wide walkway on either side. The tunnel itself stretches of into the darkness to the north and south, its vaulted ceiling some 15 feet above.
>
> The water is sluggish, and many areas are covered with layers of green algae, floating debris, and white foam. The echoes of dripping water can be heard. A terrible stench prevails, burning your nostrils. The horrible mix of offal, rotting food, and scum-filled water is dreadful.
>
> Somewhere off in the distance, a grating sound can be heard, like stone rubbing against stone. The exact direction is difficult to ascertain, but the sound comes from somewhere near.

PCs are free to travel north or south. The fleeing skulks are not far in the northern direction. Should the PCs travel this way, they soon come to area **1**. If the PCs head south, they soon find themselves lost and disoriented within the city's labyrinth of sewers. (DMs can develop the rest of the city's sewer system as they see fit.)

Thieves have a chance to detect the direction of the noise equal to their Detect Noise score, but they suffer a –5% penalty to their roll because of the echoing tunnels.

PCs must walk single file while upon the walkway, which is slick in places. If the PCs are forced to engage in combat within a sewer tunnel, they must make a Dexterity check every round they are so engaged. Failure indicates that they have slipped and fallen. The DM should roll percentile dice for each falling PC and consult the chart below:

01–25 The PC has fallen but remains on the walkway. Unfortunately, if the PC was carrying anything on her waterside hand, that item has fallen into the 10'-deep sewer water.

26–55 The PC has slipped and fallen into the water, dropping anything he was carrying at the time. The water is 10 feet deep, so any PC unable to swim or wearing metal armor drowns if left unassisted (as explained in the *Player's Handbook*). Any PC immersed in the sewer water has a 10% chance of contracting a disease that causes severe cramps and diarrhea in one day. These symptoms result in –2 penalties to attack and damage rolls for the next three days unless cured by someone with the Herbalism nonweapon proficiency or a *cure disease* spell. Paladins are immune to the disease-infested water.

56–00 The PC falls on the walkway but avoids falling in the water. The PC is prone and loses all attacks for the next round while trying to recover. Opponents in melee range can add a +2 bonus to their attack rolls against the PC during that round.

The Sewer Lair

Smugglers once used this small lair before the City Watch discovered it and put an end to their operation. The skulks stumbled upon it several months ago and have been using it ever since.

1. Sewer Junction. The water enters one of the many junctions located beneath the city. This particular junction is the meeting place of four primary lines. The junction is 30 feet across and rimmed by walkways.

Read or paraphrase the following to the PCs as they enter this area:

> The tunnel widens to form a chamber where four tunnels intersect. Numerous pieces of wood and other debris float in the middle of the intersection, brought from unknown corners of the city. As you enter the junction, the walkway widens to form a small nook or platform 8 feet across.
>
> Obvious neglect has taken its toll on this junction, as much of the brickwork has chipped and broken away from the walls, leaving empty rectangular holes.
>
> A few small, harmless rats scurry along the far walkway and glare at you momentarily before continuing on their way.

If the PCs inspect the southeast corner of the ledge, see area **2** below.

2. Concealed Entrance. Two stones lie on the ledge near this wall. These stones, however, did not come loose on their own. Careful examination reveals chisel marks that indicate the stones were removed with tools. The holes left by these missing stones are spaced diagonally apart at 2' intervals. Anyone searching higher on the wall discovers four more similar holes, forming a crude ladder.

PCs who climb up the wall using the holes as handholds and footholds discover a stretched piece of gray lizard skin about 15 feet up the wall. The skin has been tinted and textured to appear as part of the stonework

and is noticeable only at a distance of 5 feet or less. Pulling the skin away from its anchors reveals a 5'-square passage leading south. Flickering torchlight can be seen from deeper within the tunnel.

3. Torchlit Passage.

> This 7'-tall passage is just wide enough to allow you to proceed single file, but the going would seem easy compared to the slick and tricky footing of the sewer. Iron brackets on the walls hold dimly burning torch stubs that illuminate the passage just well enough to see. The walls and floor have been worked, leaving a smooth, well-crafted finish. The construction is obviously old, for the chisel marks have been smoothed over with the passage of time.

If the PCs continue down the tunnel, read or paraphrase the following:

> Around the corner of the passage, another torch dimly illuminates the entrance to a chamber. Low whispering can be heard from within, but it is too soft to make out what is being said.

The whispering comes from area **4**. A PC thief making a successful Detect Noise roll can distinguish two voices.

4. Guard Chamber.

> A single flickering torch fills this room with dim, wavering shadows. The 10'-high room is sparsely furnished with a rickety old table and four crumbling chairs in the northeast corner. Several earthenware mugs have been haphazardly tossed upon the table along with a simple leather wineskin. Beside the door lies a wooden bucket that seems to have been forgetfully tossed into the corner. Two wooden doors lead out of this chamber.

Two skulks are here discussing in Common what happened in the streets tonight. If PCs successfully approach using stealth, they can surprise the skulks in the middle of their conversation. (Roll surprise normally.) If not, the skulks use their camouflage ability to blend with the walls of the chamber, rendering them 90% undetectable. If the skulks hide successfully, they attempt to backstab the PCs (as 5th-level thieves). After the first round of combat one of the skulks flees through the eastern door to warn the skulks in areas **7** and **13**.

Skulks (2): AC 7; MV 12; HD 2; hp 11, 6; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA backstab as 5th-level thief; SD camouflage; SZ M; ML 6; Int average (9); AL CE; XP 120; *MC5*; short sword.

The mugs are old and cracked and not very useful for holding liquid. The wineskin, on the other hand, is in good condition and contains fine wine (a gift from the thieves' guild). Both doors are unlocked, but if any combat takes place in this room, the female skulk in area **5** slips a thick wooden bar across the door from that side.

5. Skulk Nursery. If the occupant of his room managed to bar the door, the PCs might be hard-pressed to gain entry. Although the door is old and slightly warped, it is still quite solid. PCs can break down the door by making a successful Open Doors roll, but consider the door magically held for purposes of opening.

Within the chamber are a single female skulk and two skulk children. The mother remains in this chamber unless she hears the voice of her mate (area **13**) assuring her that it is safe to emerge. Should PCs gain access to the chamber, she uses her camouflage ability to escape detection and then flees out of the complex and into the sewers, leaving the children to fend for themselves.

The mother wears a single black opal (400 gp value) on a leather thong around her neck (a gift from her mate) but carries no weapons. If she must, she bargains for her life and those of the children with the gemstone.

The chamber contains a single burning torch on the south wall, a broken bed covered with tattered blankets, and a pile of hay on which the children sleep. Beneath the hay is a 5'-diameter stone trapdoor that has not been opened for decades. The skulks know of its location but have been unable to open it. A brass pull-ring once allowed the trapdoor to be easily lifted, but it has long been stolen and heavy iron wedges have been driven into the cracks to seal it further. PCs must pry the heavy stone slab open with crowbars or similar devices, with magic such as a *knock* spell, or by *reducing* the trapdoor with the reverse application of an *enlarge* spell.

Opening the stone trapdoor reveals a 3'-diameter shaft that descends 10 feet to a tunnel leading south into the darkness. PCs can descend the shaft without danger of falling.

Skulk, female: AC 7; MV 12; HD 2; hp 6; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d2 (fist); SD camouflage; SZ M; ML 5; Int average (8); AL CE; XP 65; *MC5*; unarmed.

Skulk children (2): AC 9; MV 12; HD 1; hp 3, 2; THAC0 20; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SD camouflage; SZ S; ML 2; Int average (8); AL CE; XP nil; MC5; unarmed.

6. Trapped Corridor. This unlit, 10'-high hall appears bare and unremarkable. Near the center of the hall the skulks have stretched a thin brass wire across the passage. PCs not taking special precautions stumble over this wire and fall unless they make a successful Dexterity check. Tripping the wire also releases a small, camouflaged sack of stones from the ceiling that hits the fallen PC with THAC0 15. (PCs with light sources have a 25% chance of noticing the sack, while thieves receive a +25% bonus to their Find Traps roll.) Any PC struck by the sack suffers 1d4 points of damage. If the PC is not wearing a helmet or other protective headwear, he or she must make a successful saving throw vs. paralyzation or be knocked unconscious for 5 rounds and disoriented for 2 rounds after that. (This disorientation causes the PC to suffer a –2 penalty to attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks and a +2 penalty to AC.)

If an alarm has been sounded, the door to area **7** is barred from the other side. PCs can break down the door by making a successful Open Doors roll, but consider the door magically held for purposes of opening.

7. Sleeping Area. This smelly room contains several dusty and ragged straw sleeping mats, along with an old sea chest. The light of a single torch illuminates the area but casts wild shadows all around the room. Another door is visible on the north wall, but it is closed.

This area appears empty when PCs enter, especially if an alarm has been sounded or the trap at area **6** has been triggered. Three skulks are presently hiding in the shadows. (They are 90% undetectable when hidden.) If one of the skulks from area **4** came this way to warn the others, he is also hidden.

The sleeping mats are covered with the remnants of old blankets and ragged cloaks the skulks use to keep warm. PCs searching through these mats find nothing except fleas. The sea chest is unlocked and contains two wineskins of fine wine, three loaves of fresh bread, and an entire wheel of fine cheese wrapped in cloth. Imbedded in the cheese are three gemstones the skulks have hidden for themselves: an amethyst (200 gp), a citrine (80 gp), and an eye agate (20 gp). The amethyst and citrine were taken from the merchant's stolen purse.

Skulks (3): AC 7; MV 12; HD 2; hp 13, 11, 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA backstab as 5th-level thief; SD camouflage; SZ M; ML 6; Int average (9); AL CE; XP 120; *MC5*; dagger.

Any combat in this area brings Kaleos and Vicissis from area **13**. They arrive in 2 rounds.

8–12. Abandoned Guildhall. These chambers were once part of a thieves' guild destroyed years ago by the City Watch. This complex also contains a small temple dedicated to Mask, god of shadows and thievery. DMs placing this adventure in their own campaign worlds should substitute a similar deity or power.

When the City Watch attacked the guild, many of the thieves were trapped down here.

Instead of risking the lives of the soldiers to capture these trapped thugs, the City Watch decided to seal up the entrance and let the remaining thieves die of starvation and suffocation. The trapdoor (see area **5**) was wedged shut, and the City Watch never returned to gather the bodies of the trapped criminals, many of whom have since risen as ghouls. These undead creatures are waiting for someone to open the sealed trapdoor and grant them access to the outside world.

8. Sleeping Quarters.

> The narrow tunnel bends eastward, opening into a rectangular chamber of hewn stone. All is deathly quiet, and there is an eerie sense of foreboding. Within the chamber are the rotting remains of three small cots and a round table. The cots have fallen away in disrepair, dropping their moldy, straw-filled mattresses to the floor. The table leans lopsided upon its two remaining legs in the corner. The dried husks of several half-eaten rats lie about the chamber.

Hidden behind the leaning table in the corner of the room is a ghoul. It was alerted to the sound of the trapdoor opening in area **5** and hides until the table is disturbed, at which time it attacks. PCs should roll for surprise normally. If the table remains undisturbed, the ghoul waits until the PCs enter area **9** and attacks from the rear (gaining a +4 bonus on its initial attack if the PCs are surprised).

This creature still wears the tattered and rotting remains of its leather jerkin and the gnawed remnants of its sword scabbard. The short sword that once filled the scabbard has been discarded and lies rusting in area **11**.

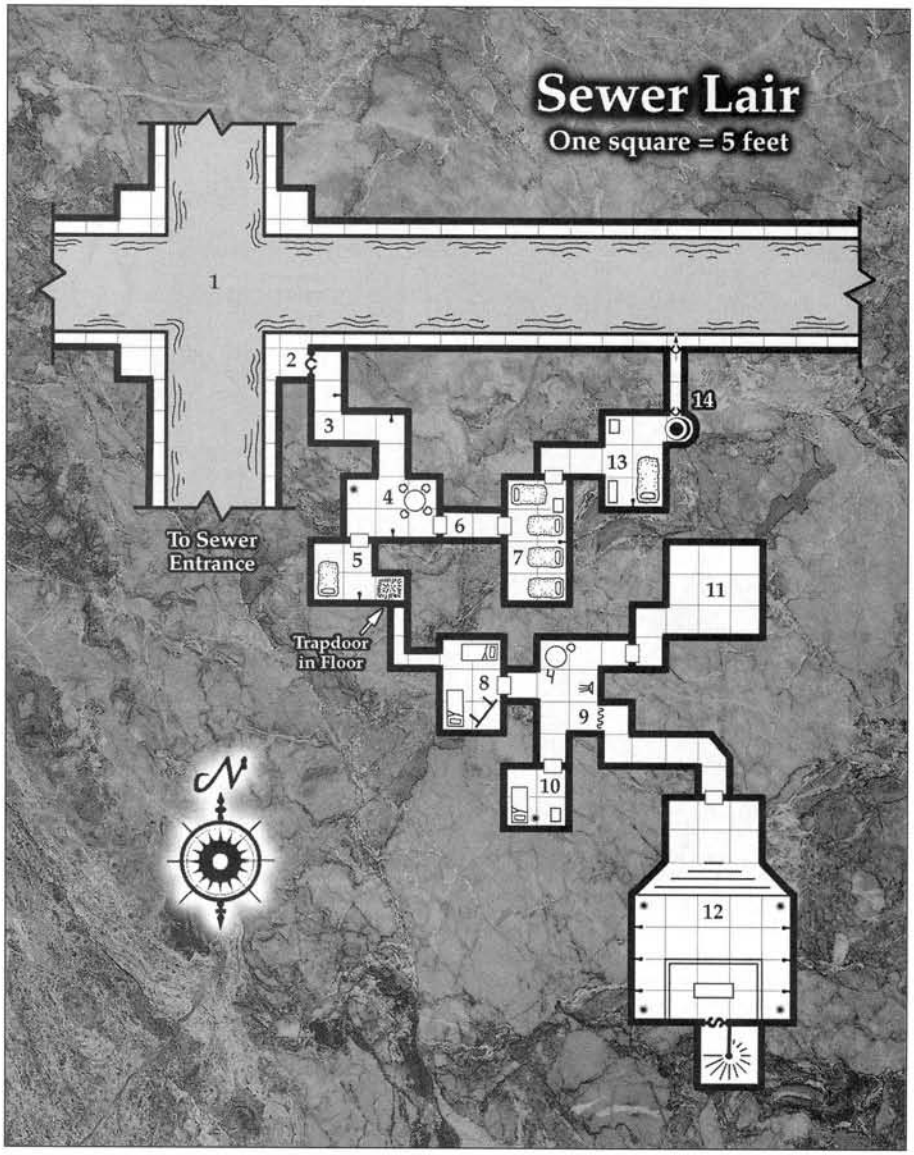
Any combat within this chamber alerts the ghouls in area **9**.

Ghoul: AC 6; MV 9; HD 2; hp 9; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d6; SA paralyzation; SD immune to *sleep* and *charm*; SZ M; ML 12; Int low (7); AL CE; XP 175; *MM*/131.

9. Guard Post. This larger room was once a guard post and resting area for the guild's on-duty guards. Now mostly empty, it contains only an old rotting table with two small chairs and a single overturned brass brazier lying on the floor. Two wooden doors lead to deeper areas of the complex, as does a tattered and dingy curtain in the southeast corner.

The area is presently occupied by two ghouls who are hiding behind the curtain. The ghouls leap out to the attack when any PC approaches the curtain. One round after combat erupts, the ghouls from area **11** appear.

There is nothing of interest in this chamber except for a small leather belt pouch lying under the fallen brazier. The pouch holds 12 pp and 25 gp.



Ghouls (2): AC 6; MV 9; HD 2; hp 14, 11; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d6; SA paralyzation; SD immune to *sleep* and *charm*; SZ M; ML 12; Int low (7); AL CE; XP 175; *MM*/131.

10. Lieutenant's Quarters. This small chamber was set aside for one of the guild's lieutenants. He remains here after all these years, trapped in an undead state. Even if he detects the presence of intruders within the adjoining chamber, the ghoul waits patiently and silently in this chamber until the PCs enter. This creature still possesses some of its thieving talents. The door to this chamber opens inward and to the east, and the ghoul will Hide in Shadows (45% chance of success) behind the door until he can spring from behind the PCs and launch a Backstab attack with his claws and bite (+4 to the initial attack, causing double damage).

Ghoul: AC 6 (5 with *amulet*); MV 9; HD 2; hp 16; THAC0 19 (15 with backstab); #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d6; SA paralyzation, backstab, Hide in Shadows (45% chance); SD immune to *sleep* and *charm*; SZ M; ML 12; Int low (7); AL CE; XP 270; *MM*/131; *amulet of protection +1*.

The chamber contains the remnants of a small cot, a bucket, and an end table. Within the single drawer of the table can be found a crumbling piece of yellowed parchment. Upon the parchment is a crude map of some area of the city sewers indicating the location of a hidden complex or lair. This was to be the new guild location, but the City Watch arrived and destroyed the guild before it had time to move. (DMs can use this opportunity to introduce another area of the sewer system to the PCs including, perhaps, the location of the present guild's headquarters.)

Horrible undead creatures lurk behind a tattered curtain.

11. Guild Treasury. Another pair of ghouls live in this chamber that was once the guild's treasury. If the ghouls were drawn to area **9** by the sounds of combat, they are not here.

Smashed crates and rolls of rotten silk are strewn haphazardly about the chamber. PCs searching the refuse also find some scattered coins (17 gp, 32 sp, and 70 cp), an empty leather scroll case, a rusted short sword (left by the occupant of area **8**, the sword snaps at the hilt the next time it deals maximum damage), a potion of *sweet water*, and three *sheaf arrows +1*. The *arrows* are scattered around the room and require at least 1 turn to gather.

Ghouls (2): AC 6; MV 9; HD 2; hp 10, 9; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d6; SA paralyzation; SD immune to *sleep* and *charm*; SZ M; ML 12; Int low (7); AL CE; XP 175; *MM*/131.

12. Temple of Mask.

This large chamber is littered with the shriveled and half-eaten bodies of rats. The 30'-high, vaulted ceiling is cracked, and the once beautifully colored tiles that adorned it have faded with the passage of time. Many of these tiles are missing altogether and can be found among the bodies of the dead rodents that lay about the room.

The west and east walls are adorned with murals depicting somber processions of black-robed figures wearing haunting white masks. The figures seem to be walking toward the south, where a wide set of cracked and uneven stairs climb to a raised area with a 20'-high, domed ceiling supported by cracked stone buttresses. Near the back of this large chamber is a raised stone dais, upon which rests a simple stone altar. The altar is covered with brown stains. Each corner of the chamber contains the rusting frame of an iron brazier, but the bowls themselves have been removed from their stands.

The remnants of the former guild leaders are now the sole occupants of this chamber. They exist as a pair of ghasts and still command their ghoulish guild as they did in life. The ghasts are hidden behind the altar and do not reveal themselves until the PCs climb the stairs. Both ghasts wear tattered black robes and white porcelain masks that conceal their rotting features. These ghasts have retained their former powers and use them in combat to destroy any intruders entering their lair.

Ghast (formerly 5th-level thief): AC 4; MV 15; HD 4; hp 17; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d8; SA paralyzation, stench, backstab; SD immune to *sleep* and *charm*; SZ M; ML 14; Int very (12); AL CE; XP 975; *MM*/131; *brooch of shielding* (absorbs 45 points of *magic missile* damage), *ring of free action*.

Thief abilities: PP 50%, OL 42%, F/RT 40%, MS 40%, HS 31%, DN 20%, CW 90%.

Ghast (formerly 5th-level cleric): AC 3; MV 15; HD 4; hp 24; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d8; SA paralyzation, stench, spells; SD immune to *sleep* and *charm*, spells; SZ M; ML 14; Int very (12); AL CE; XP 1,400; *MM*/131; *bracers of defense AC 3*.

Spells (3/3/1): 1st—*command, cause light wounds, darkness*; 2nd—*hold person, resist fire, silence 15' radius*; 3rd—*animate dead*.

The altar is covered with bloodstains but is otherwise unremarkable.

In the middle of the south wall is a 5'-wide secret door that pivots easily on a central axis. The door is protected by a *glyph of warding* that magically blinds anyone who opens it. (Vision can be restored with a *cure blindness* spell.) Beyond lies a stone spiral stairway that descends into the darkness below. The stairway descends several hundred feet into a series of catacombs and secret passages deep beneath the city. DMs can further develop this area as they see fit. Perhaps the temple of some evil deity is located below, with catacombs guarded by undead or other creatures. An entire community of slaves could also be found below, forced to labor in mines by nonhuman masters. There are endless possibilities for further development.

13. Leader's Quarters.

A low-burning torch on the wall illuminates this area. Compared to other chambers in this lair, this one is lavishly furnished. A single bed made of beaten and scarred oak sits alone in a corner to the south. Old, moth-eaten blankets and cloaks have been draped over the battered frame. A decrepit chest with three wide drawers sits across from it. A squat sea chest rests in the northwest corner of the room, next to a golden urn chased with floral reliefs and painted with lavender blossoms. The urn is in excellent condition. Two feet tall, it seems designed to hold a single flower stem. In the northeast corner of the room is a well with a simple hemp rope anchored to the ceiling above.

This room houses the skulk leader, Kaleos. He and the doppleganger, Vicissis, rush to the aid of the other skulks in area **7** if necessary. Vicissis takes the form of a skulk at the start of

combat but assumes the appearance of one of the PCs as the battle continues in an attempt to confuse the party.

Should the battle go badly for the skulks, Vicissis attempts to retreat to this chamber and shimmy down the well, escaping through a secret passage that leads back to the sewers (area **14**). He immediately reports to his boss, the guildmaster of the local thieves' guild.

Kaleos speaks fluent Common, Elvish, and Dwarvish. If Vicissis deserts him, he pleads for his life with all the treasure stashed in this room. If questioned about the doppleganger, he informs the PCs that Vicissis approached the skulks with the intention of having them join the local thieves' guild.

Kaleos's bed contains only dirty and dingy bedding. In the chest of drawers PCs can find several old cloaks, breeches, and two pairs of soft leather boots. All of the clothes are old and moth-eaten. Underneath the clothes, in the second drawer, is a suit of *studded leather armor +1* suited for a small human or half-elf.

The sea chest contains food and wine, but beneath the food lays a gold-plated door handle fashioned into the form of a curling snake (12 gp) and a platter of chased and pierced gold. This large oval platter (2' long × 1' wide) is delicate but undamaged (150 gp). In the chest, under a small sack of apples, is a simple leather scroll case. Within the rolled piece of leather is a tattered but salvageable scroll containing the priest spells *know alignment* and *speak with dead* (cast at 8th level).

The golden urn (60 gp) is light but cumbersome. Hidden inside the urn is a 6'-long, ornamental, gold-plated chain (80 gp value).

Kaleos (skulk leader): AC 7; MV 12; HD 3; hp 18; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA backstab as 5th-level thief; SD camouflage; SZ M; ML 7; Int average (10); AL CE; XP 175; *MC5*; *dagger +1*, short sword.

Vicissis (doppleganger): AC 5; MV 9; HD 4; hp 30; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d12; SA surprise; SD *ESP*, immune to *sleep* and *charm*, saves as F10; SZ M; ML 13; Int very (12); AL N; XP 420; *MM*/60.

14. Well and Escape Tunnel. This well was once part of a shop in the city above. The well was covered over years ago, leaving only a stone shaft that extends from the ceiling of this area (some 20 feet above) to the floor below (15 feet down). A thin hemp rope has been suspended down the shaft for easy egress, and PCs using the rope to lower themselves to the bottom of the well do not fall.

The rope is tied to an iron ring imbedded in the roof of the shaft and drops all the way to the bottom of the well, where the balance of its 60' length lies jumbled. The rope is actually a *rope of climbing*, but neither the skulks nor Vicissis knows that it is magical. Cutting the *rope* causes it to lose its magical properties.

At the bottom of the well are several sacks, a small wooden coffer, and three bales of silk. The bales are bound with leather cords and canvas wrapping, although this has not saved their outer layers from rot. The material is colored with faint pastels, and each bale still contains 80–90 square feet of usable material. Each bale is worth 30 gp.

The sacks are all typical canvas and contain a variety of coins. Gathered here are 30 gp, 90 sp, and 150 cp.

The wooden coffer is unlocked but trapped. The clasp is protected by a tiny needle, although thieves suffer no penalties to their Find/Remove Traps rolls. The needle stings anyone opening the coffer, causing 1 point of damage and injecting paralytic poison. (A failed saving throw causes immediate paralysis that lasts for 2d6 turns, while a successful saving throw vs. paralyzation negates the effect.) The poison can be neutralized by casting a *neutralize poison* spell or drinking a potion of *sweet water*. A *slow poison* spell delays the effect for the duration of the spell, as does successful use of the Herbalism and Healing proficiencies (as outlined in the *PH*).

Within the coffer are several gemstones and crystals. These include a cut and polished garnet (300 gp), a piece of coral (100 gp), a shard of smoky quartz (50 gp), an uncut and rough tiger eye (5 gp), an uncut and rough moss agate (5 gp), and an uncut piece of blue quartz (5 gp). The 300-gp garnet was stolen from the merchant whom the PCs encountered at the start of the adventure.

Each of the uncut stones can be cut and polished by someone with the Gem Cutting proficiency and the proper tools. A failed proficiency check reduces a gem's value to 1 gp, while a successful proficiency check increases the value of the tiger eye, moss agate, or blue quartz to 10 gp.

If Vicissis has the time, he takes the coffer as he flees the lair.

If the bolts of cloth are moved aside, they reveal a small (3' wide × 4' high) wooden door in the base of the well. This door pushes open to reveal a 10'-long, 4'-high passage leading to the sewers. This low, narrow tunnel is dark and damp. It ends at a thin stone door with no handle. The door can be pushed out and opens onto the walkway as indicated on the map. This door is a one-way affair used for escape only. It is undetectable from the sewer side without magical aid and cannot be opened from that direction.

Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs slay or capture the skulks, they can claim any treasure they find. Note, however, that certain items—specifically the urn and golden platter in area **13** and the silk in area **14**—are stolen property. If PCs try to sell these items in the city above, they might be reported to the City Watch. (Suitable penalties for the possession of stolen goods within the city could be imprisonment with light work for up to two years, a fine of up to double the value of the stolen articles, and probation for up to three years.)

If the PCs capture Vicissis (quite an accomplishment for a low-level party), he refuses to divulge the names of guild members or the location of the actual thieves' guild, preferring death to the guild's wrath. His fear of the guildmaster is greater than his fear of the PCs, and he tells the PCs this if threatened by them.

If the PCs report their findings to the City Watch, they are given a total of 200 gp for their work and asked to explore the rest of the city sewers to locate other areas that the guild might be using as lairs. This could lead to a long-term campaign involving the thieves' guild.

The merchant who first hired the PCs will locate them shortly after they emerge from the sewers if the PCs do not search him out. He rewards them for the effort and requests that his stolen property be returned to him. The amethyst and citrine in area **7** and the garnet in area **14** belong to him. If the PCs refuse to return the merchant's gems, he reports them to the City Watch. If the PCs willingly return the gems, the merchant aids the PCs by giving them the names and locations of several "knowledgeable" persons in the city who might aid them in their search for the thieves' guild. (The actual names and locations of these contacts are left to the DM.) The merchant might also present the PCs with more adventure opportunities in the future.

PCs can return to the sewers at a later time to explore the area below the temple (area **12**). The DM should develop this area to suit his or her campaign. Whatever the PCs decide to do, this area serves as an ideal starting point for a series of adventures beneath the city as well as a base for the PCs as they explore the area. Ω

Oops File!

Johnathan Richards pointed out a small boo-boo in his adventure, "Challenge of Champions III" (Issue #80): The mistake is in the coded symbols accompanying the diagram of Scenario #6: MEDIA. Specifically, the third set of symbols decodes as "OUIVE SLIME" the way the symbols are depicted. It's easily fixed by drawing a line between the bottom points of the "H" shape, so the symbol decodes as "L" instead of "U."

Thanks To Our Playtesters!

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Ben Patten
Jeff Wiseman
Bobbie Stover
Anita Fletcher
David McCarley
Jason M. Adkins
Mark Allen King
Jamie Lynn Palmer
Falinia L. Lawson
Greg Edmondson
Michael Poole
Lawrence Root
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Brendan O'Prey
Alyxandra D. Burgos-Ero
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Vincent DiMeo
David Bridell
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Jame E. Johnson
Ahmad Jamal Thomas
Ken Bryant
Steve Green
Jason Miller
John Gergel
Sean Teasdale
Colleen Flanagan
Craig Sanders
Ken Ip
Shannon Amsden

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Putting half a dozen bandits in a cave, even with a few traps and a zip line, is something you do while the players are setting up (that is, fighting over pencils, rolling practice dice, and accusing each other of pinching potions the week before). These bandits must be the thickest bandits out. They've just bungled a robbery and they've gone back to a hideout that is "easy to trail them back to." Why bother making Bruiser 5th level? He only has one dagger swipe, and that's his lot. Either drop his level and make him fight, or up the PCs' levels and still make him fight.

Anyhow, thanks for your time. Having had my say, I might see if I can do any better by sending off for your submission guidelines. We'll see.

L. Waldron
Walsall, England

Future issues will deliver everything you've asked for and more. Aside from a really cool DARK•MATTER™ *adventure planned for a later issue, we intend to publish only D&D adventures in future issues. Furthermore, modules will focus more on interesting locales and less on overly linear or convoluted plotlines. You will see fewer campaign-specific modules and more "generic" modules designed to fit easily into any setting.*

You might want to give "The Best Laid Plans" another shot. The Side Trek in Issue #79 was merely a prelude of things to come: Bruiser Holloway returns this issue in "A Race Against Time." PCs who had an easy time capturing Bruiser might not have so easy a time keeping him locked away! This is the first time we've published a full-length sequel based on a Side Trek, and we're curious to know what readers think.

Under the Sea ... Again?!

I recently bought Issue #79, and what should I find but another undersea adventure. In the past four issues, there have been five adventures set entirely or in part underwater: "To Walk Beneath the Waves," "Lear the Giant-King," "Peer Amid the Waters," "Deepstrike," and "The Akriloth."

I have my own pet theories as to why there have been so many underwater adventures in the last year:

1. The big surprise of 3rd Edition is that it includes only rules for adventuring underwater. Mr. Perkins is just trying to make sure we have a wealth of adventures to help us get started.

2. One of the gamers in Mr. Perkins's regular group accidentally summoned a sea bass while casting a *find familiar* spell, and now Mr. Perkins is trying to find ways to include this character in his campaign.

3. The theory that Mr. Perkins writes all of the adventures himself is true, and he just got a new fish tank.

4. The constant rain in the northwest has destroyed Mr. Perkins's concept of reality. He can't tell the difference between adventures taking place on the land and ones taking place under the sea.

Seriously, though, I would be happy not to see any underwater adventures for a long time, unless they have a very good twist, such as "Peer Amid the Waters," but no more sunken cities please. I buy the magazine for inspiration, not repetition.

Jeff Carpenter
Portland, OR

Gulp! The sudden wave of undersea adventures could indeed be the result of too many rainy days in Seattle. It doesn't help that I'm a Pisces. Rest assured, I won't be accepting any new underwater adventures for a while.

Avoiding Temptation

I play the AD&D game not because I think it's the best rules system out there but because it is the classic RPG. The game's antiquated archetypes and mechanics are as familiar as an old armchair and just as comfortable. Therefore, I do not play the game to try innovative new settings or styles; it's not the point.

While it is arguable that many of the modules published by Wizards of the Coast can be converted to different settings, I, for one, am not willing to do so if another option is available. Over the years, I have increasingly seen DUNGEON *Adventures* to be that option. The adventures are always of high quality, perhaps due to the high standards of the editors. In recent years it has seemed as though the handful of adventures in the magazine are each worth one of the $14.95+ modules produced by WotC. The fact that most of them are not specific to a particular campaign setting is one of

Thanks To Our Playtesters!

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Neil Kaiser
K.C. Merchant
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John Trent
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Amanda Blankenship
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Michael Caires, Jr.
Ernest Legault
Michael Caires
Amanda Caires
Joe Alvarez
Andy Helmstetter
Diana Burroughs
Todd Mathewson
John Kwawegen
Stephen Alvarez
John Smith
Lawrence Aspeotes
Jake Patrick
Brian Muller
Terrell Hardy
Jerry Grace
Michael Fox & Company
(Gerrick, Kerrig, Jessium,
Kala, Ingold, and Arius)
Dane Dickson
Gerard Claiborne
Glen R. Branch
Donnie Wayne Mitchum
Doug Hooey
Rodney Davis
Robert Brewster
Mark Brewster
Chris Beck
Rowley Marrlott
Melissa Chavez
Robert Taylor

their most desirable traits, in my eyes. I don't suggest that this letter be taken as a suggestion that all readers feel as I do and that I propose that, based on my opinions, the magazine not publish any setting-specific adventures—only that this one reader would certainly prefer if it were so.

On a more specific note, I greatly enjoyed Issue #79. It was full of generic adventures but, moreover, the majority of them were very low-level. This is key because I believe that published high-level adventures (for levels 7+) should be far outweighed by those for starting characters. It seems to me that high-level adventures must be created with specific parties in mind (shaped largely on the spells available to the powerhouse clerics and wizards). I also prefer to see characters raised up through the levels rather than created at a high level, and because I inevitably start more campaigns than I finish, the call for low-level adventures is much higher.

So please keep up the current trends and avoid the temptation to include setting-specific and high-level adventures.

Alex McGavin
via email

Conduit Conundrum

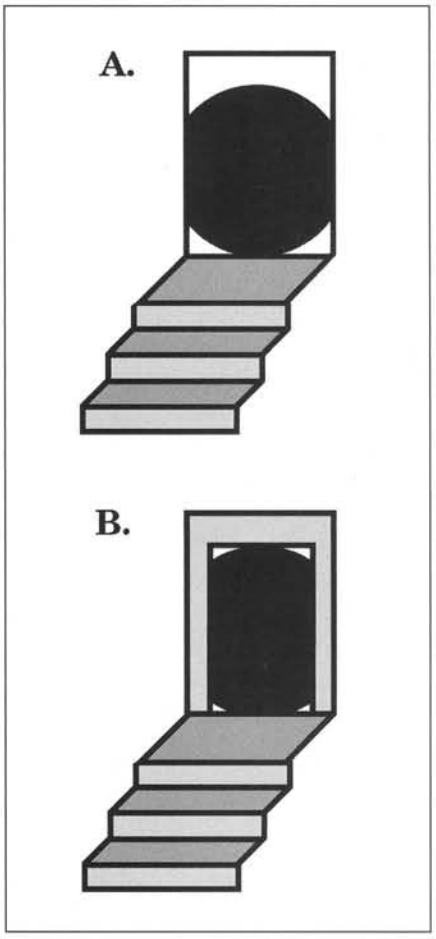
A short comment on "Peer Amid the Waters" by Johnathan M. Richards (Issue #78):

The text states that characters cannot get to the vast treasure because the *conduit bracelet* blocks the door to the treasure room (area 11). The text also states that the passageways are 5 feet wide by 8 feet tall, and that the *conduit bracelet*'s gateway has a diameter of 6 feet. When the *conduit bracelet* gateway covers the door to area 11, there should be a 2'-high, 5'-wide unblocked opening above it, which will easily allow the party to swim into the treasure room and get all the treasure.

Marty Measel
via email

Johnathan responds: "It's true that the conduit bracelet *forms a 6'-diameter conduit. It's also true that the passageways are 5 feet wide and 8 feet tall. However, I envisioned a standard-sized doorway leading from area 11 (the treasure room) to the stairway at area 1. The doors in my house are all around 30 inches wide and 80 inches tall, and that's pretty much what I had in mind. I should have made this clearer in the room description. While Othaey's tomb needed a treasure room for logic's sake (patterning her pyramid after those of ancient Egypt), I didn't want to give low-level PCs access to that much wealth. The magical conduit therefore serves the dual purposes of providing access to the pyramid interior while denying access to the game-balance-destroying riches in the treasure room."*

Diagram A below illustrates what Marty had in mind; diagram B illustrates what Johnathan had originally intended. Diagram B is correct.



A Different Top-10 List

I own every issue of your magazine and recently thumbed through them with a couple purposes in mind. First, I was looking for adventures for my campaign.

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Second, I am in the process of submitting a few adventures to your fine publication (although I have to wait until I can write them in 3rd Edition format) and wanted to get a clearer sense of style.

Overall, *DUNGEON Adventures* is unquestionably the best bang for your buck where AD&D adventures are concerned. Also, the quality and diversity of the material make it superior, in my opinion, to many of the professionally published adventures sold over the years (notable exceptions being anything written by Zeb Cook—he's my favorite). I did, however, notice a few things that might be of interest to your staff.

The first concerns the "generic" nature of the material you strive to present. "Generic" seems to mean that you publish an overabundance of adventures with a country/sylvan medieval setting. I say *enough* with "The adventurers are traveling through the small town of Whatsisberg ..." beginnings. These seem more overdone than the "standard tavern intro." Happy faerie folk are not essential to every adventure. I love the material presented such that it can be dropped into cities or other climates without much work. The occasional "sword and sandal" or "Weird Tales"-style adventure is a welcome change from saving the happy elves, halflings, or dwarves from the mean old wizard, dragon, or humanoid tribe.

In general, the modules I find easiest to use are those that don't present an intro beyond "This adventure can be set in any town" or "in any section of the Underdark." These I can drop *directly* into a campaign. The setting should be no larger than the scope of the adventure's action. If the action takes place in a single building, there is seldom a need for defining much outside of it. Leaving the extraneous details out means I don't have to comb through the text and eliminate references to the name of a mountain chain that doesn't exist in my campaign world. I appreciate the work of all authors who've grasped this principle of design. This said, I am not against publishing adventures for official game worlds. I just have little use for a lone adventure set in the world of an aspiring author's campaign. Don't misunderstand: I would love to see *DUNGEON Adventures* run a series of modules set in a new world if it were unique and had a new flavor or angle not previously covered by Wizards of the Coast. A single scenario, however, is not as useful.

Additionally, I've noticed a few trends in your magazine. Here are the top-10 overdone *DUNGEON Adventures* scenarios:

10. Gnomes, gnomes, gnomes!

9. While traveling through the woods, you're beset by ... bandits!

8. I'd like to go fishing, but apparently the entire ocean is filled with nothing but scrags and merrows.

7. "This adventure is for characters of levels 1–3 who have nothing better to do than help everyone (just to be nice)."

6. I give up—given the dozens of other creatures that live here, how many duergar *can* live in the Underdark?

5. Shiver me timbers! The captain's a seawolf! (What did you expect? There *is* a ship in this scenario!)

4. It's a ruse! That friendly-seeming NPC is actually (surprise) a werewolf!

3. We appear to be in the sewer system. Oh no! That can only mean ... wererats!

2. Hey! How about an adventure featuring a lycanthrope? That'd be really different!

1. T'would be terribly clever, I fear, to steal a plot from William Shakespeare.

My final comment: Please print more high-level stuff! If I never see multiple adventures for levels 1–3 in an issue, it'll be too soon! Mid- and high-level characters require much more experience to advance, and the adventures are much more intricate and detailed. I think most DMs can run a 1st- to 3rd-level module off the tops of their heads. Try whipping up something to challenge 15th-level PCs on the fly! I know you can only print what you receive, so consider this a plea to authors as well.

Despite the wealth of opinions I've presented about problems, your magazine is my single favorite periodical. I wouldn't write if I didn't care. As Dennis Miller says, "I could be wrong." Thanks for over a decade of adventure. Keep up the great work!

Matt Fischer
St. Louis, MO

We receive very few high-level adventures that we can publish. We do have an adventure for 15th-level characters slated for an upcoming issue, however.

You'll be pleased to hear that we're fresh out of gnomes and Shakespearean adaptations. We also hope you enjoy our two "duergar-free" Underdark modules in this issue, "Divisions of the Mind" and "Khazefryn." Darren Dare's adventure, "Skulking Below," demonstrates that one can, in fact, design a sewer-based adventure without wererats!

We can't promise not to publish adventures featuring lycanthropes. In fact, we have an adventure featuring a pack of winter werewolves appearing in the not-too-distant future. However, we'll try to encourage our writers to find new and clever ways to use lycanthropes (and other commonly encountered monsters) in their adventures.

We will continue to provide adventures for low-level PCs, particularly with the launch of 3rd Edition when many DMs will be starting new D&D campaigns. However, we'll do our best to balance these with adventures for mid- to high-level PCs. Of course, what we publish depends on what we receive.

We are taking steps to minimize the number of campaign-specific details in our modules. Contrary to some opinions, the magazine is not *the place for authors to show off their own campaign worlds; the magazine's purpose is to provide readers with scenarios for their home campaigns. Thus, we are taking greater strides to make our adventures more universal and adaptable.* Ω

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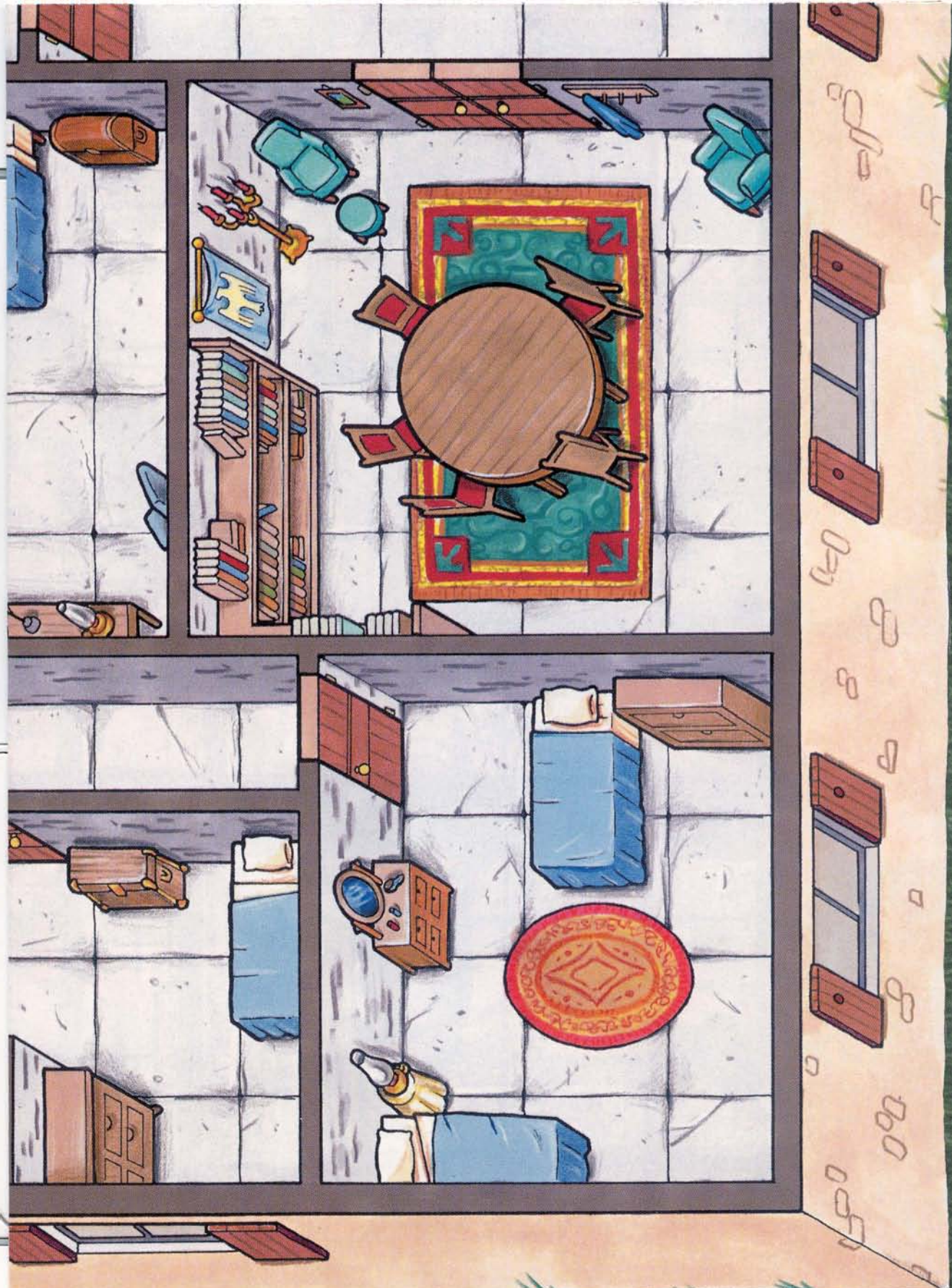

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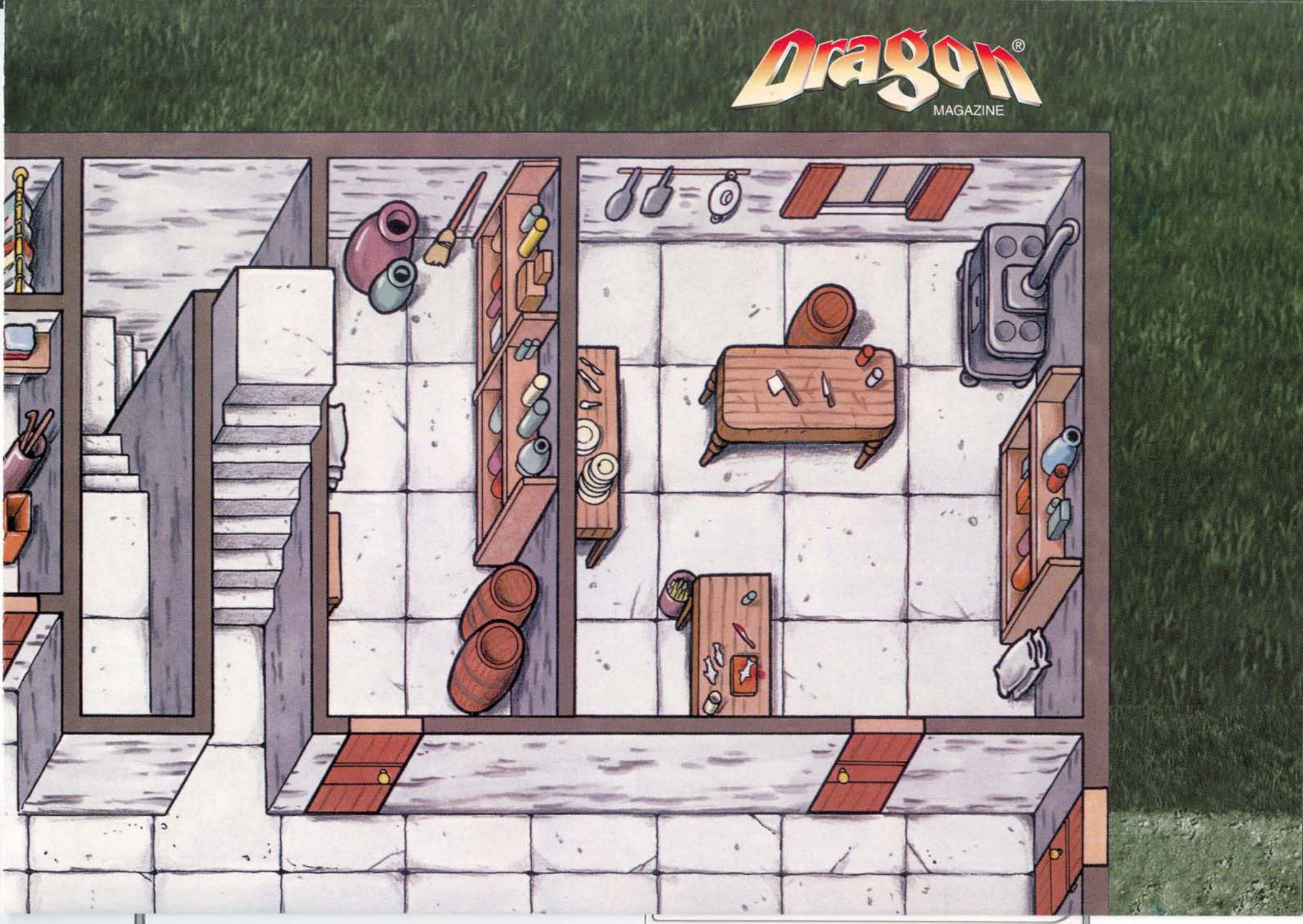
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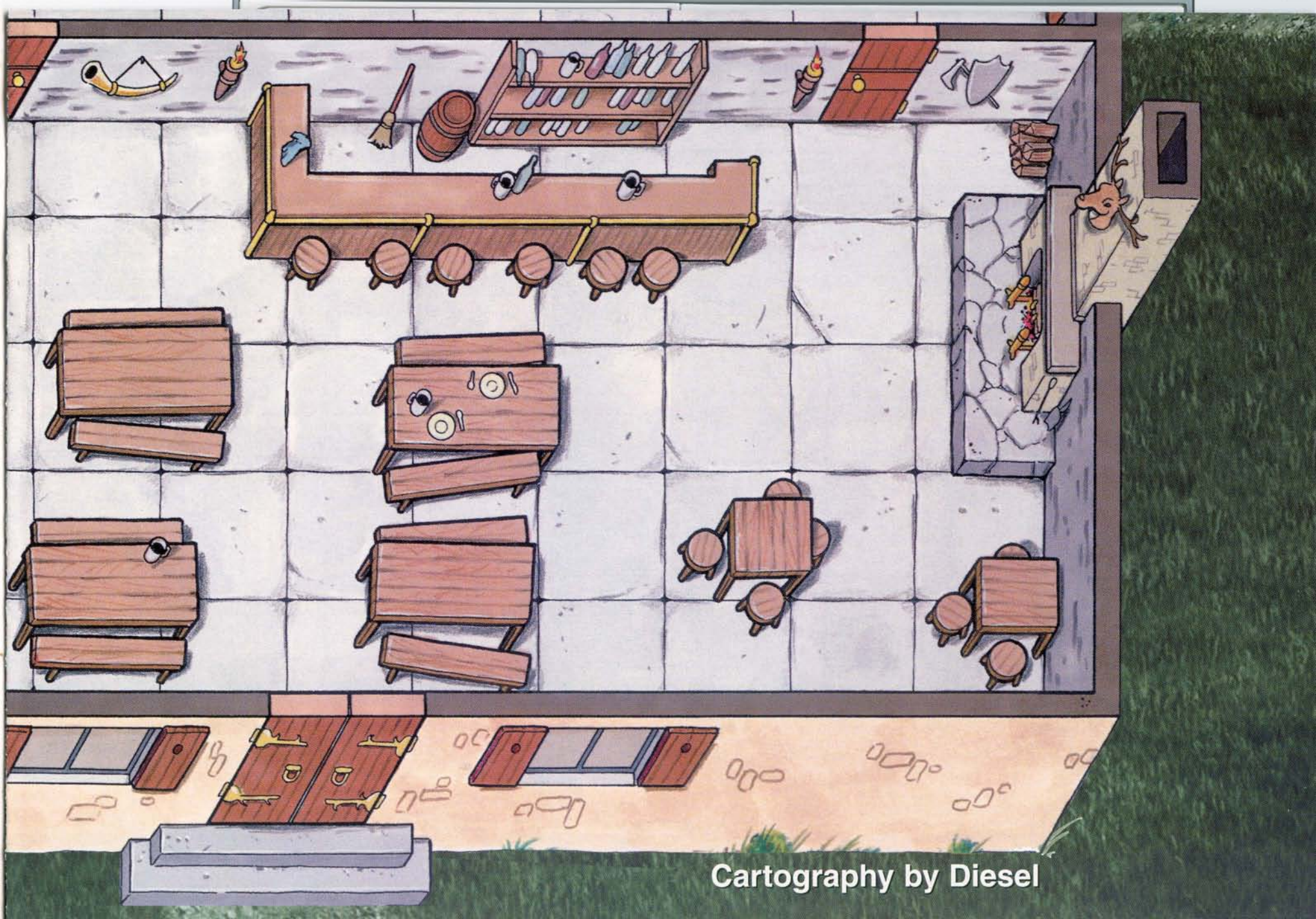
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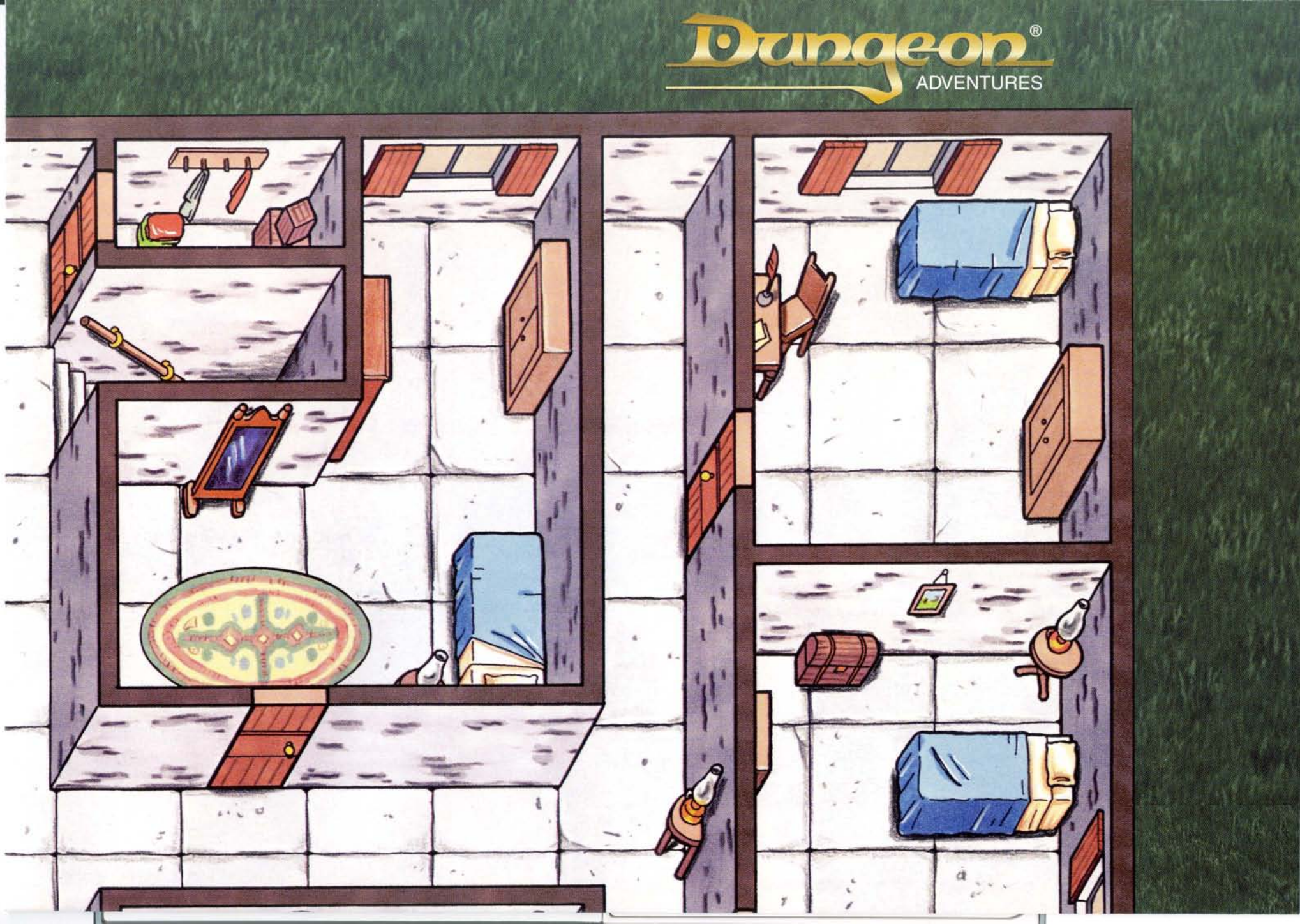
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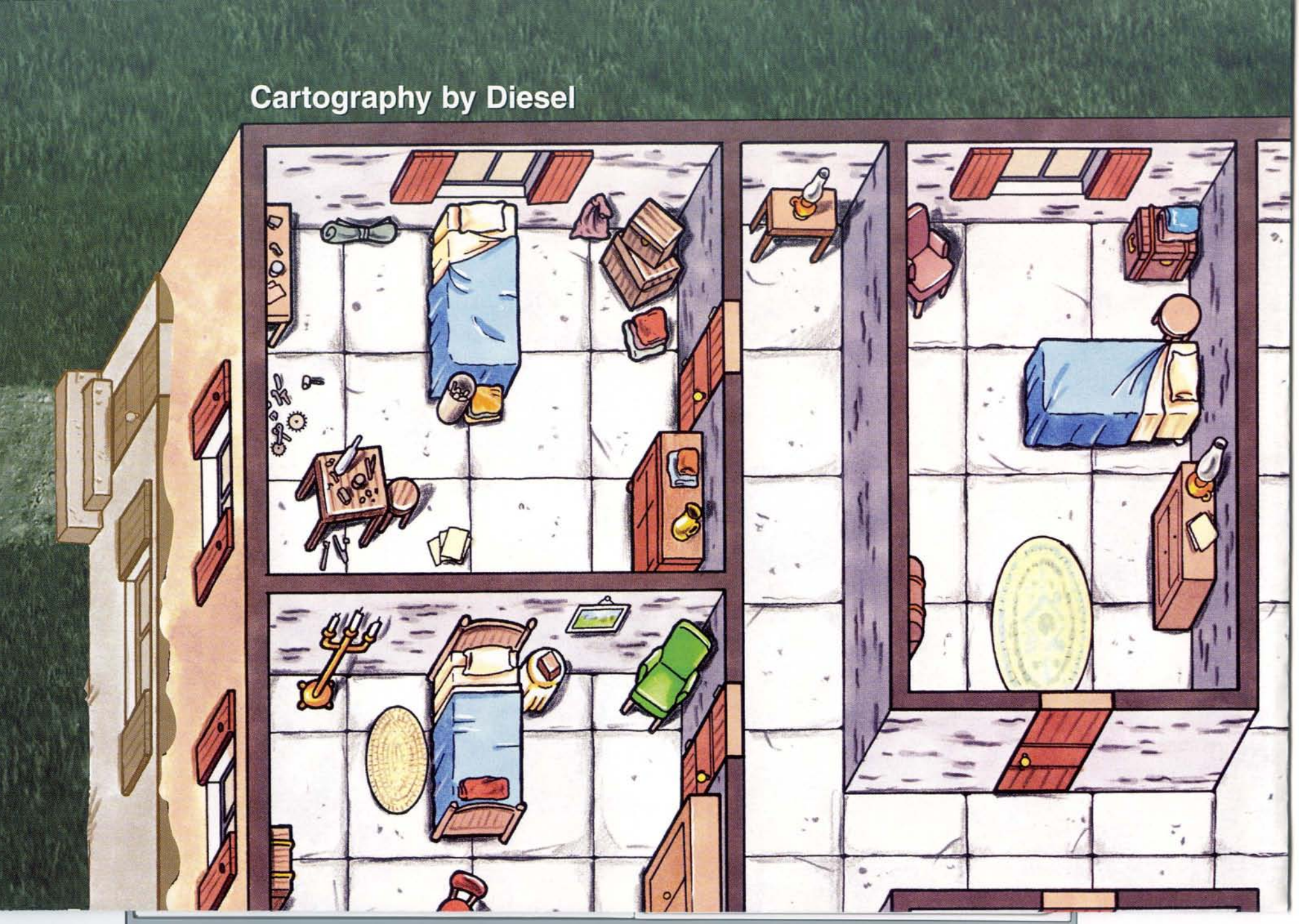
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